Gacha Gacha™

Yutaka Tachibana

TOKYOPOP®

Gatcha Gacha™

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by Yutaka Tachibana

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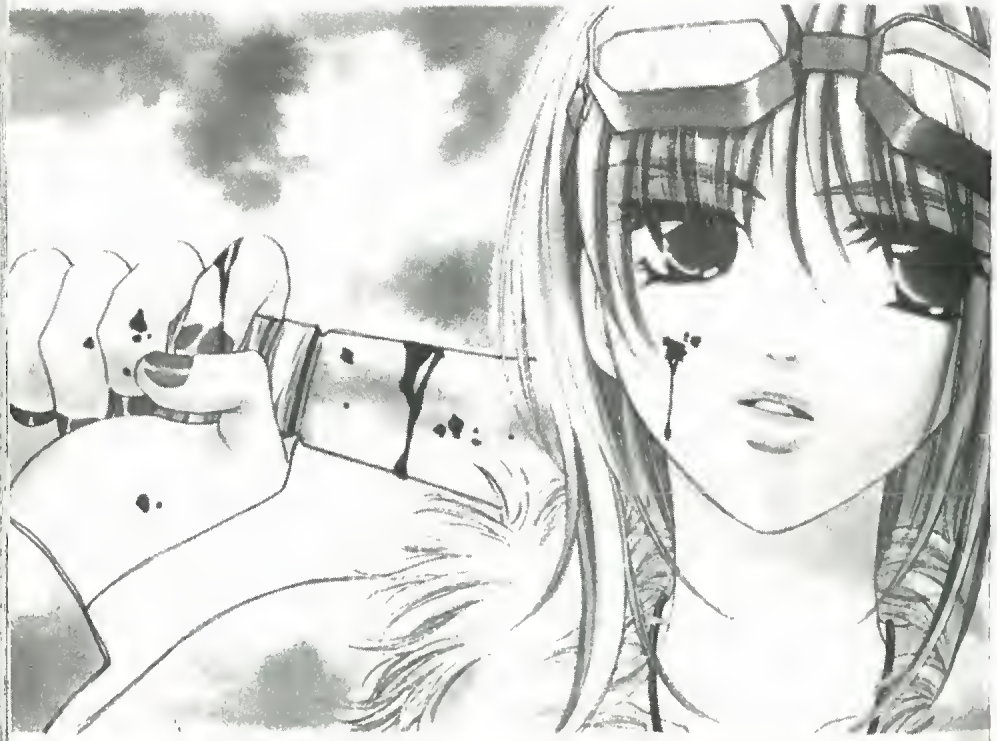
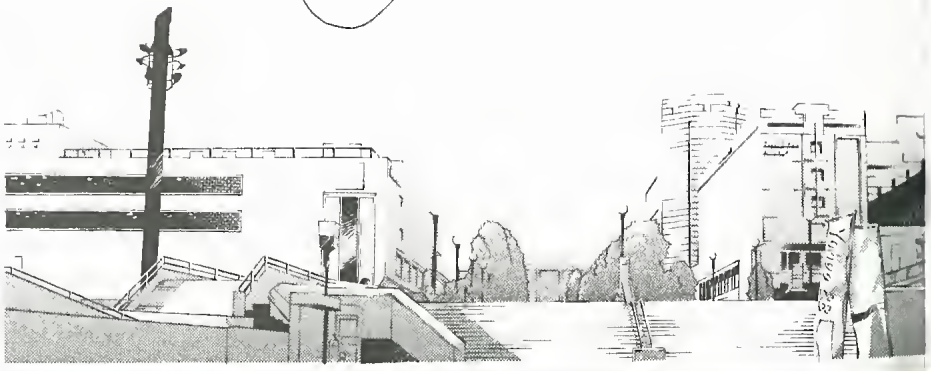
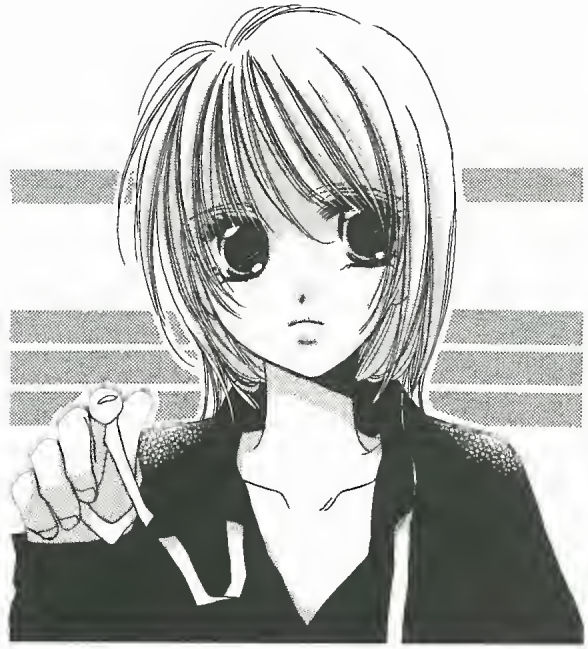


THE SKY IS BLUE TODAY. A BRILLIANTLY CLEAR, PURE BLUE. EVERY TIME I SEE THAT BLUE...

...IT EVOKES A MEMORY OF A TINY PAIN, OF AN EVER SO SLIGHT TREMOR IN MY HEART...

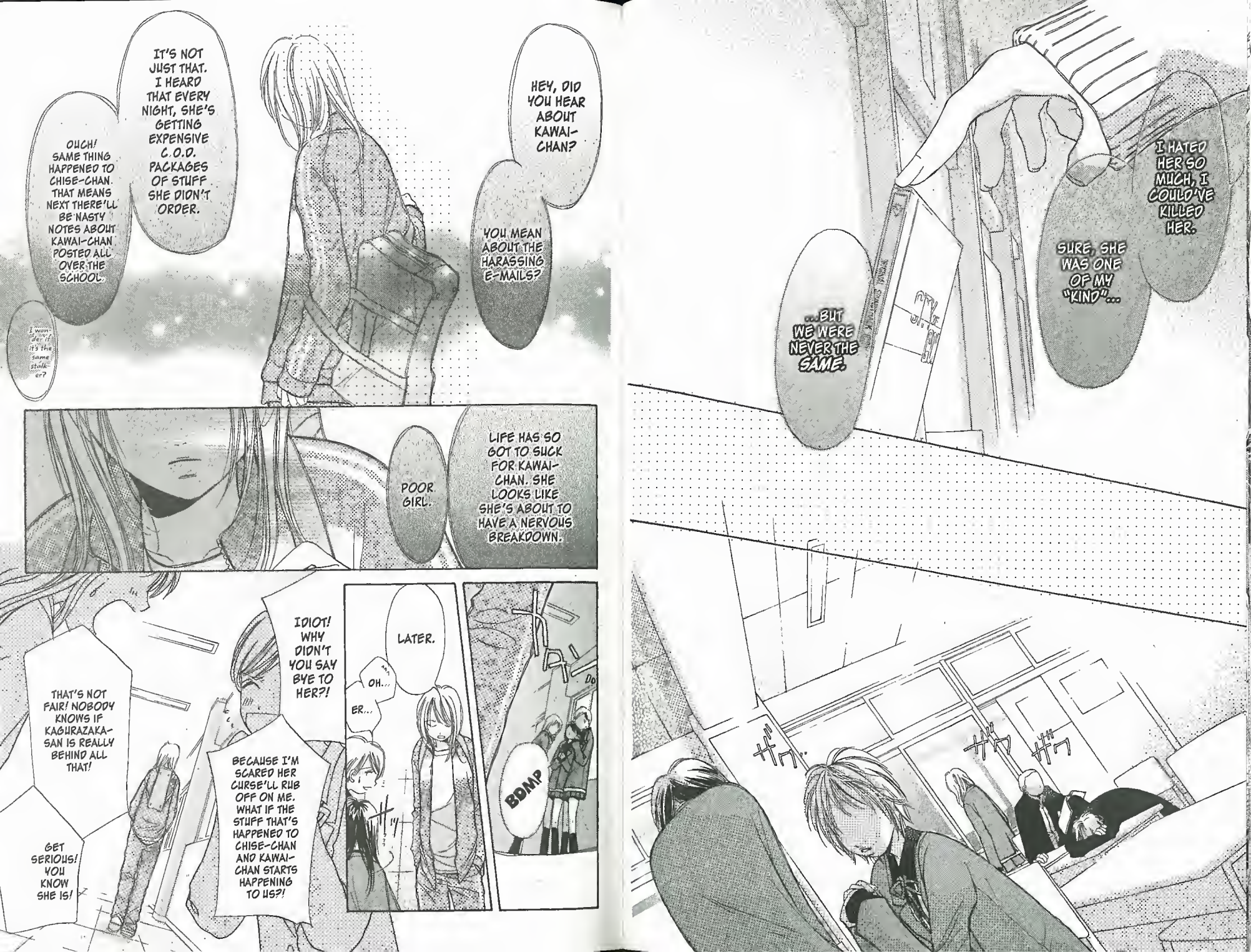
...KAGU-RAZAKA-SAN?





YEAH?
HUH?
WELL, WELL, WELL... SO IT REALLY IS YOU, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
SAE? SAE SONO'OH?
HRM?
YOU LET YOUR HAIR GROW OUT.
WELL, IT HAS BEEN FOREVER SINCE WE SAW EACH OTHER LAST.
ALMOST DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU.
CATCH UP WITH ME LATER.
Eh? Hm?
.....
I SEE YOU STILL LIKE TO DATE THE STUPID, USELESS ONES.
Like someone who shall remain nameless
Nameless
KAGURAZAKA-SAN! YOU SHOULDN'T INSULT OTHER GIRLS' BOYFRIENDS!
THE STUPID ONES ARE EASY TO HANDLE. THEY LACK COMPLICATIONS.

NOT EVEN FOR A SECOND.
IF YOU SAY SO.
WHEN DID I EVER SAY SHE WAS MY FRIEND?
SHE SOME-ONE FROM JUNIOR HIGH?
I WAS KINDA SHOCKED. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD ANY FRIENDS.
HUH? THEN WHO THE HELL WAS SHE?
THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF A FRIEND.
NOT EVEN ONCE DID I THINK OF HER AS ANY-THING BUT AN ENEMY.
SOMETHING FAMILIAR...
YOU ASK ME THAT NOW?
NOW?
Ha ha ha!
WHATEVER. HOW ARE YOU, ANYHOW?
TA-TA FOR NOW!
I AM RUNNING LATE, THOUGH.
THIS GIRL REMINDS ME OF SOMEONE...
FINE ...
LATER, HATER.
THAT WAS QUICK.
WHOA.
...BUT WHO?


I HATED HER SO MUCH, I COULD'VE KILLED HER.
SURE, SHE WAS ONE OF MY "KIND"...
...BUT WE WERE NEVER THE SAME.
HEY, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT KAWAI-CHAN?
YOU MEAN ABOUT THE HARASSING E-MAILS?
IT'S NOT JUST THAT. I HEARD THAT EVERY NIGHT, SHE'S GETTING EXPENSIVE C.O.D. PACKAGES OF STUFF SHE DIDN'T ORDER.
OUCH! SAME THING HAPPENED TO CHISE-CHAN. THAT MEANS NEXT THERE'LL BE NASTY NOTES ABOUT KAWAI-CHAN POSTED ALL OVER THE SCHOOL.
I wonder if it's the same stalker?
POOR GIRL.
LIFE HAS SO GOT TO SUCK FOR KAWAI-CHAN. SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ABOUT TO HAVE A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.
LATER.
OH...
ER...
BDMP
IDIOT! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY BYE TO HER?!
BECAUSE I'M SCARED HER CURSE'LL RUB OFF ON ME. WHAT IF THE STUFF THAT'S HAPPENED TO CHISE-CHAN AND KAWAI-CHAN STARTS HAPPENING TO US?!
THAT'S NOT FAIR! NOBODY KNOWS IF KAGURAZAKA-SAN IS REALLY BEHIND ALL THAT!
GET SERIOUS! YOU KNOW SHE IS!

SOME-THING JUST FLEW INTO MY MOUTH!
HUHH ?!
HUH?
PEH.
HEY YOU!!
YEAH, YOU!!!
ALL RIGHT, WHO'S TOSSING ALL THIS PAPER AROUND?
THIS AIN'T NO PARADE!
I almost choked on it, dammit!
WHAT'S SHE LOOKING AT?
I'M IN A FREAKIN' BAD MOOD RIGHT NOW, SO I DON'T NEED YOU--
IS THERE SOMETHING THERE...?
NOPE, NOTHING.

ALL THE GIRLS GETTING VICTIMIZED ...
...WERE ALL KAGURAZAKA-SAN'S GROUPIES!
...THAT BITCH...
SHE IS SO GOING TO PAY FOR THIS!!
OH! KAGURAZAKA-SAN!
Going home?
MEEP!
I-I'm s-s-sorry!!
Ack!
THMP

FIRST OFF...

Hello, everyone! Thank you very much for buying *Gatcha Gacha* volume 7!

So, *Gatcha Gacha* has made it all the way up to volume 7. While that's a pretty decent number for a series, the pace is kinda slow, don't you think? (Sorrrry...) I'm not only talking about the rate the new volumes are published, but about the characters and stories themselves. Their growth rate (as couples, anyway) is glacial. They are developing, yes...but not in a way that anyone can see. Seven books of this!

Geez, how is everything ever going to come together at this rate...? Ummm... ::coughcough::

Er, well, anyway, I have five freetalks to play around with in this volume, and most of them turned into rants, so consider yourself warned, okay?

The topic of those rants center around the cafeteria food problem happening in a certain country. The aggressor in this whole mess still has the gall to call itself a "country of gentlemen"...!

SAY WHAT?
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING! SOMEBODY HERE WAS TAKING FOREVER IN THE LADIES ROOM~~
HA HA HA HA HA HA
ACK!!
NORIKO...
Hey.
DON'T TELL HER THAT!!
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GOT A COUPLE OF PROBLEMS OF HER OWN.
HEY, UH...
SAE!

NOT ANY-THING SPE-CIFIC, AT LEAST.
I WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE SKY.
I WAS HOPING SOME-THING MIGHT CHANGE, YOU SEE.
SORRY ABOUT TOSSING TRASH AROUND.
YOU'RE KAGURAZAKA-SAN, RIGHT?
...CHANGE?
I'VE SEEN THIS GIRL IN CLASS... SHE'S SAE SONO'OH.
WHATEVS. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SO, WHAT'S THE STORY, ANYWAY?
MURDERER
I MEAN, IF YOU CAN'T USE SOMETHING, MIGHT AS WELL TOSS IT, RIGHT?
NOTHING MUCH. JUST GETTING RID OF A NOTEBOOK I DON'T NEED ANY MORE.

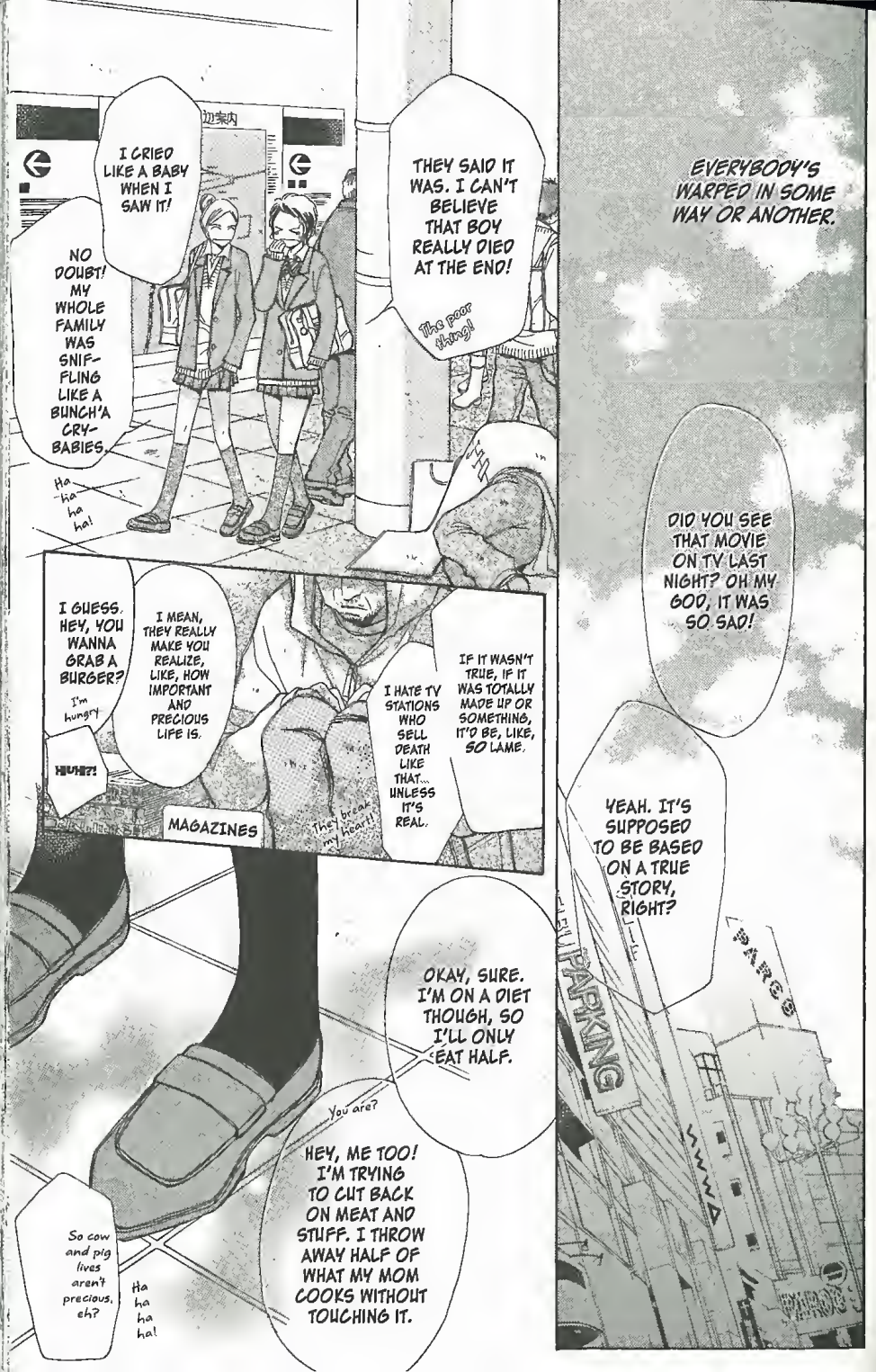
THAT CHICK IS WEIRD.
"I WAS HOPING SOMETHING MIGHT CHANGE, YOU SEE."
"NOPE, NOTHING. I WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE SKY."
CHANGE?
DID SHE MEAN THE SKY? OR SOMETHING ELSE?
HMPH. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE ANY OF MY CLASSMATES DARED TO GREET ME AT ALL.
Aren't you the least bit scared?
Scared? Of what?
Don't you know what happens to anyone who gets close to her?!
What d'you mean, what?
GAH! NOT EVEN TRYING TO BE DISCREET.
YEAH, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. LIKE, NOW.
A-A-ANYWAY ...
HUH? BUT...
...SORRY WE KEPT YOU WAITING, SAE. LET'S GO.
Kagurazaka-san...
Ka...
...wait...
Must've been #2.
OH!
KAGU-RAZAKA-SAN.
OH, WELL. I'M USED TO IT.
Sae!?
SEE YOU TOMORROW!

keff keff
NOW GO AWAY.
A-AND...
...I CAN GET DOWN BY MYSELF.
keff
Why does she wear such thin clothing?
CRAP.
IF YOU'RE NOT SCARED, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THAT TREE?
Bet you can't get yourself down.
I...I CLIMBED UP HERE TO RELAX! THAT'S ALL!
JUMP DOWN FROM THERE.
HERE.
DON'T WORRY. I'LL CATCH YOU.

I THOUGHT I FRIKKIN' TOLD YOU TO QUIT HARASSING MY CLASSMATES!!!
KANAKO!!!
WHAT WAS IT SHE HOPED WOULD CHANGE?
BOO!
THOSE STUPID, UGLY GIRLS WERE HANGING ALL OVER YOU! YOU'RE MY MOTO-CHAN, NOT THEIRS!
WHY SHOULD I?!
"BOO"? NO PLAYING CUTE, YOU COLD-HEARTED WITCH.
YOU AREN'T, HUH? LIKE ANYONE BELIEVES THAT.
YOU CAN GET MAD AT ME ALL YOU WANT. I'M NOT SCARED OF YOU!
I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING WRONG! IT'S ALL THEIR FAULT!

NO, BEST TO STAY OUT OF THAT. KANAKO'S ENOUGH TO BABY-SIT THESE DAYS.
MURDERER
OR SO I THOUGHT.
.....
THE WAY I REMEMBER IT, SHE'S A PERFECTLY NORMAL GIRL. NICE, PRETTY, FAIRLY REGULAR FRIENDS.
IF I HAD TO DESCRIBE HER IN A WORD, I'D SAY "BALANCED." ALMOST TOO WELL-BALANCED AT TIMES...
MOTOKO, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE HERE!
OH...
I LIVE HERE. YOU'RE SHOCKED TO SEE ME IN MY OWN HOME?
TAKAHIRO, YOU FORGOT SOMETHING.
BUT YOU, UM, YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO THE, UH, HANSHIN TIGERS BASEBALL GAME...
WHAT'S HE SO NERVOUS ABOUT?

OOF!!
MOTO-CHAN!
IF YOU DON'T HURRY UP, I'LL LEAVE YOU BEHIN--
C'MON.
I'M SO SOFT ON THIS GIRL, IT MAKES ME SICK.
SAE SONO'OH.
"I WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE SKY."


I CRIED LIKE A BABY WHEN I SAW IT!
THEY SAID IT WAS. I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT BOY REALLY DIED AT THE END!
The poor thing!
NO DOUBT! MY WHOLE FAMILY WAS SNIFFLING LIKE A BUNCH'A CRY-BABIES.
Ha ha ha ha!
I GUESS. HEY, YOU WANNA GRAB A BURGER?
I'm hungry
HUH!?
I MEAN, THEY REALLY MAKE YOU REALIZE, LIKE, HOW IMPORTANT AND PRECIOUS LIFE IS.
I HATE TV STATIONS WHO SELL DEATH LIKE THAT... UNLESS IT'S REAL.
IF IT WASN'T TRUE, IF IT WAS TOTALLY MADE UP OR SOMETHING, IT'D BE, LIKE, SO LAME.
MAGAZINES
The break my heart!
EVERYBODY'S WARPED IN SOME WAY OR ANOTHER.
DID YOU SEE THAT MOVIE ON TV LAST NIGHT? OH MY GOD, IT WAS SO SAD!
YEAH. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE BASED ON A TRUE STORY, RIGHT?
PARKING
OKAY, SURE. I'M ON A DIET THOUGH, SO I'LL ONLY EAT HALF.
You are?
HEY, ME TOO! I'M TRYING TO CUT BACK ON MEAT AND STUFF. I THROW AWAY HALF OF WHAT MY MOM COOKS WITHOUT TOUCHING IT.
So cow and pig lives aren't precious, eh?
Ha ha ha ha!

IT'S YOUR WATCH.
YOU TOOK IT OFF BEFORE WE...
I THOUGHT ABOUT GETTING IT FOR YOU AS A PRESENT, SO I ASKED TAKAHIRO TO SHOW ME HIS.
OH, HELLO, MOTO-CHAN. DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WANTED TO GET A WATCH LIKE THIS?
!
WOMEN...
...ARE MONSTERS.
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE KANAKO IS UNIQUELY MONSTROUS.
YOU SHOULD HURRY UP AND CHANGE OUT OF THOSE SOPPING WET CLOTHES. YOU'LL CATCH COLD!
YOU SHOULD'VE CALLED ME, MOTO-CHAN. I WOULD'VE PICKED YOU UP AT THE STADIUM.
Oh! wow
WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT RAIN COME DOWN. IT'S POURING!

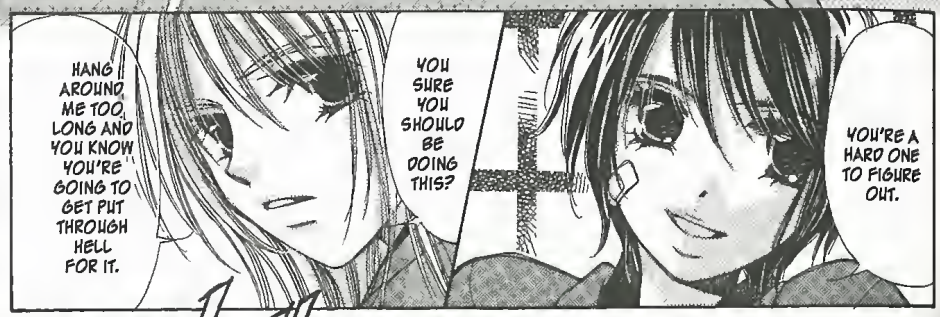
Heh.
I SEE YOU'RE STILL THE COLD, HEARTLESS BITCH YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN.
NOT PAIN, NOT PITY...
...NOT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST TWINGE IN MY HEART.
I CAN STARE STRAIGHT INTO THE FACE OF INJUSTICE...
YO.
LONG TIME NO SEE, MURDERER.
...IT'S THE SAME AS PEERING AT THE CLEAR, BLUE SKY.

KOFF
OH, 'SCUSE ME...
...MISS? I HAVE MOST OF THIS WEEK'S NEW MANGA ANTHOLOGIES HERE.
KOFF KOFF
WOULD YOU CARE TO BUY ONE?
Who cares about dumb animals?!
Ha ha ha ha ha!
I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING.
HELL NO.

BRING IT ON!!
ALL RIGHT, KIDS! THAT'S THE LINE-UP. NO LOSING TO THE CLASS 1'S TEAM, YA HEAR?!
Why just Class 1?
Oh god. I can't wait!
Hey!
Shimura-kun! Who's gonna sew your bandana?
Hm?

NOTHING MOVES ME.
NOTHING MAKES ME FEEL ANYTHING.
I'VE ALREADY SIGNED UP OUR STRONGEST RUNNERS FOR THE RELAY.
WHO, THEM?!
HA HA HA HA!
THIS IS THE BEST TEAM FOR THE 400-METER SPRINT, DON'T YOU THINK?
SOUNDS GOOD.

I KNOW SHE'S GOING TO BE TROUBLE...
...KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN?
...SO WHY THE HELL AM I HERE?
IT'S FINE.


YOU'RE A HARD ONE TO FIGURE OUT.
YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE DOING THIS?
HANG AROUND ME TOO LONG AND YOU KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO GET PUT THROUGH HELL FOR IT.

BY WHO? YOUR OLDER SISTER?
HH?!

SEEING HER FACE GIVES ME A REAL BAD FEELING...
MURDERER
SORRY, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
I APPRECIATE YOUR COMING ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE.
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SHE'S JUST AS TWISTED--- NO, EVEN MORE TWISTED THAN EVEN KANAKO?

TELL ME, IS YOUR SISTER IN LOVE WITH YOU?
OR IS IT JUST SISTERLY DEVOTION GONE HORRIBLY WRONG?
ISN'T THAT WHY YOU CAN'T STOP YOUR SISTER FROM HARASSING YOUR CLASSMATES?
"I'M SO SOFT ON HER, IT MAKES ME SICK."
NONE OF YOUR DAMN BUSINESS.
WHAT IS SHE AFTER...?
MAYBE. SO WHAT?
SHE'S REALLY PRETTY, YOU KNOW? YOUR SISTER. HER NAME IS KANAKO-SAN, RIGHT? SHE DITCHES SCHOOL TOO MUCH, THOUGH.
WHAT DOES SHE WANT FROM ME...?

YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT...
...BUT I'VE HAD MY EYE ON YOU FOR QUITE SOME TIME, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
WHAT THE HELL?!
YOU--!!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?! WHO IS SHE?! HOW DOES SHE--?!
SMART, BUT VIOLENT.
GREAT AT ANY SPORT. ADORED BY ALL THE GIRLS.
YOU GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO PROTECT GIRLS FROM PERVERTS AND SCUMBAGS, THOUGH YOU TEND TO GO TOO FAR, PUTTING THEM IN THE HOSPITAL FOR WEEKS.
STILL, YOU EVEN PROTECT GUYS LIKE SEKINE FROM BULLIES.
YOU'RE KIND TO THE WEAK AND HELPLESS, KAGURAZAKA-SAN. ALMOST COMPASSIONATE.
IT'S WHAT MAKES YOU SUCH A SUCKER.

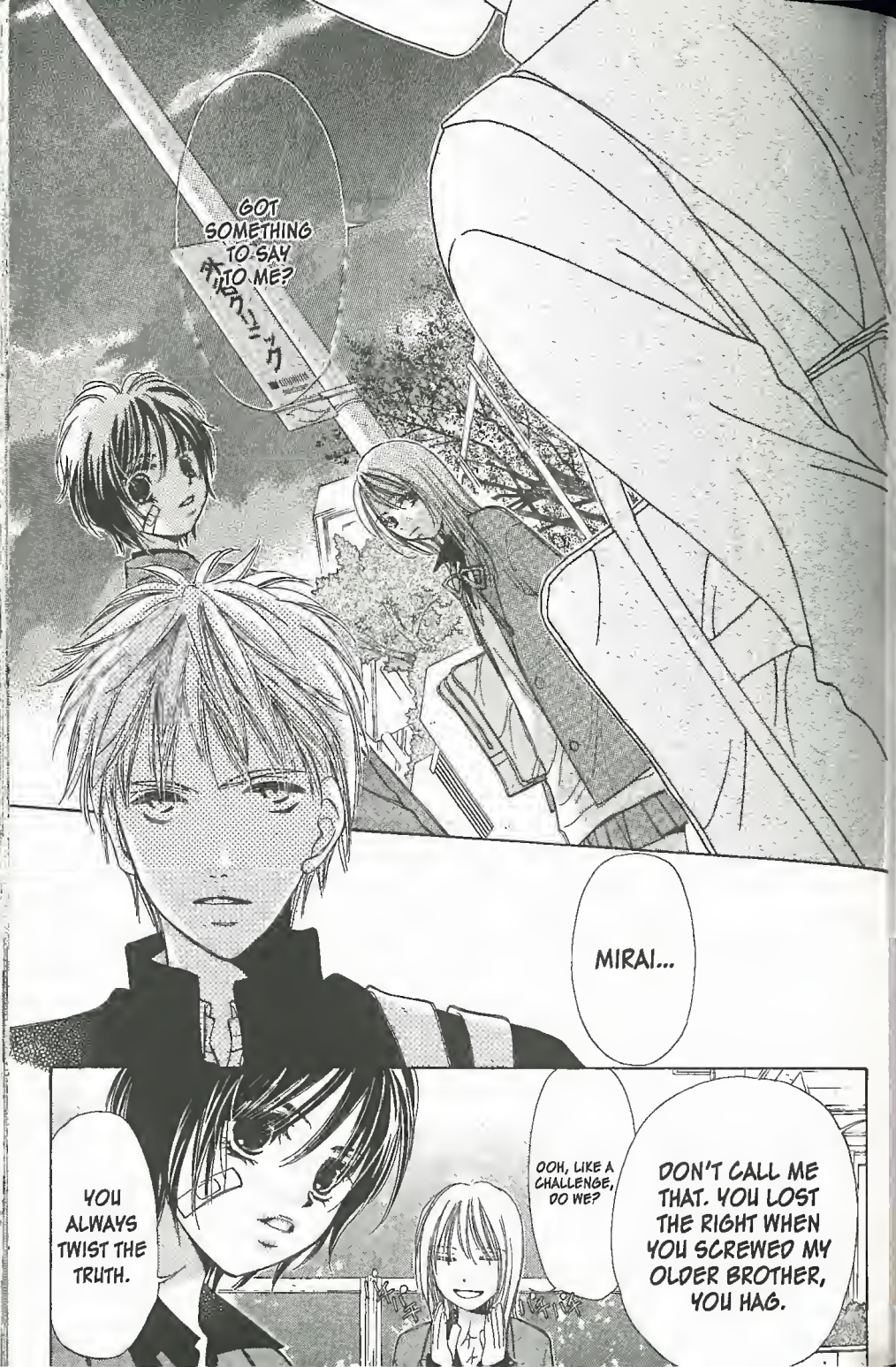
WHAAAA? WH-WH-WHY WOULD I WANNA DO THAT?!
What are you, stupid?!
COOL. THIS IS PERFECT, YUI. NOBODY'LL NOTICE IF YOU JUST HAPPEN TO MAKE KUNIYOSHI-KUN'S BANDANA AND GIVE IT TO HIM.
...along with a special message, of course
URk
uh...
--OH.
UM... YEAH.
TOMOR-ROW?
MIKI'S PLACE? SURE.
BYE-BYE.
Bye.
A-ANYWAY, I JUST WANTED TO FILL YOU IN. MEET US AFTER SCHOOL, AND BRING YOUR SEWING KIT. GOT IT?
OKAY!
WE HAVE A FEW THINGS TO DISCUSS, SO I'LL SEE YOU LATER.
Bye-bye!

IF...IF, MIND YOU...
...IF IT EVER GOT OUT THAT THE ONE BEHIND ALL THE TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENING TO THE GIRLS AROUND YOU...
...IS REALLY YOUR SISTER KANAKO-SAN, THEN SHE MIGHT BE KEPT FROM COMING BACK TO SCHOOL ALTOGETHER. YOU CAN'T DITCH WHEN YOU'VE BEEN EXPELLED.
KIND, CARING KAGURAZAKA-SAN WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO STAND SEEING SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPEN TO HER SISTER, RIGHT?
AND YOU WOULDN'T WANT THAT, WOULD YOU?
LISTEN, WE'RE GONNA SEW ALL OF THE BOYS' BANDANAS AT MIKI'S PLACE TOMORROW--
GOD, WE'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU.
KCHK
SAE?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU --?!

...SAVE ME?
...WHICH ONE IS THE REAL HER?
WELL, THAT WAS IMPRESSIVE.
NOW...
KAGURAZAKA-SAN, I NEED A FAVOR. WOULD YOU PLEASE...
THAT'S THE GUY?
MIRAI OKADA.
HE'S AN EIGHTH GRADER, JUST LIKE US. EXCEPT HE GOES TO TAKAZAWA.
HE LOOKS PRETTY NORMAL TO ME.
YES, THAT'S HIM.
GOOD. THAT MEANS HE SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.
HANDLE HIM FOR ME.
"HANDLE"? YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
VERY SURE.

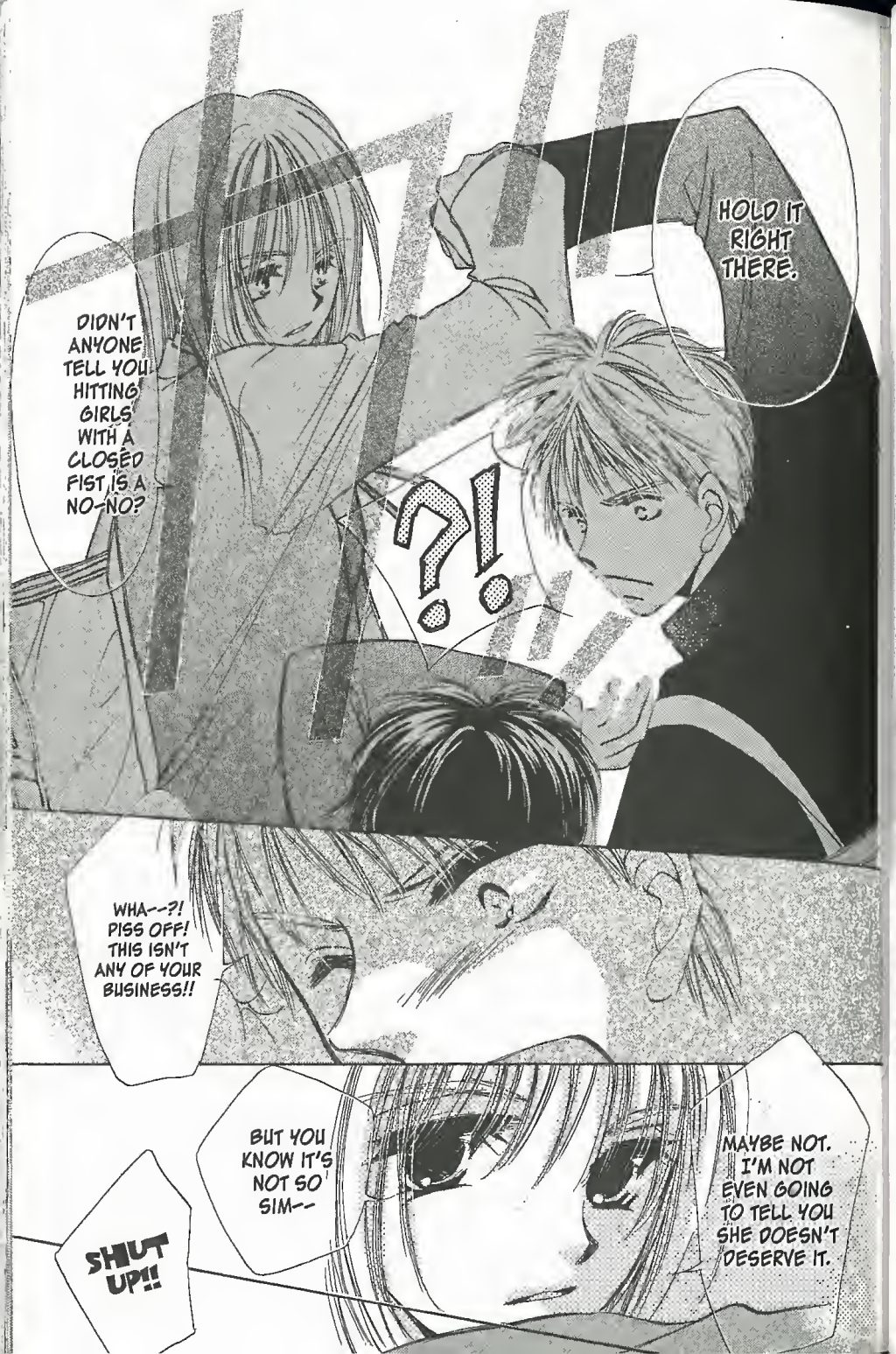
MURDERER
YOU SAW THAT, DID YOU?
...
MAYBE ...
SUCH A BEAUTIFUL BLUE STONE...
...HE MEANS EXACTLY...
...WHAT IT SAYS.
WHO KNOWS?
|...
外谷クリニック
HE APPARENTLY BRIBED ONE OF MY CLASSMATES TO WRITE IT. PRETTY DAMN VINDICTIVE OF HIM, DON'T YOU THINK?
YUP. THAT'S HIS HANDI-WORK.
WHAT'S IT MEAN? WHY "MURDERER"?

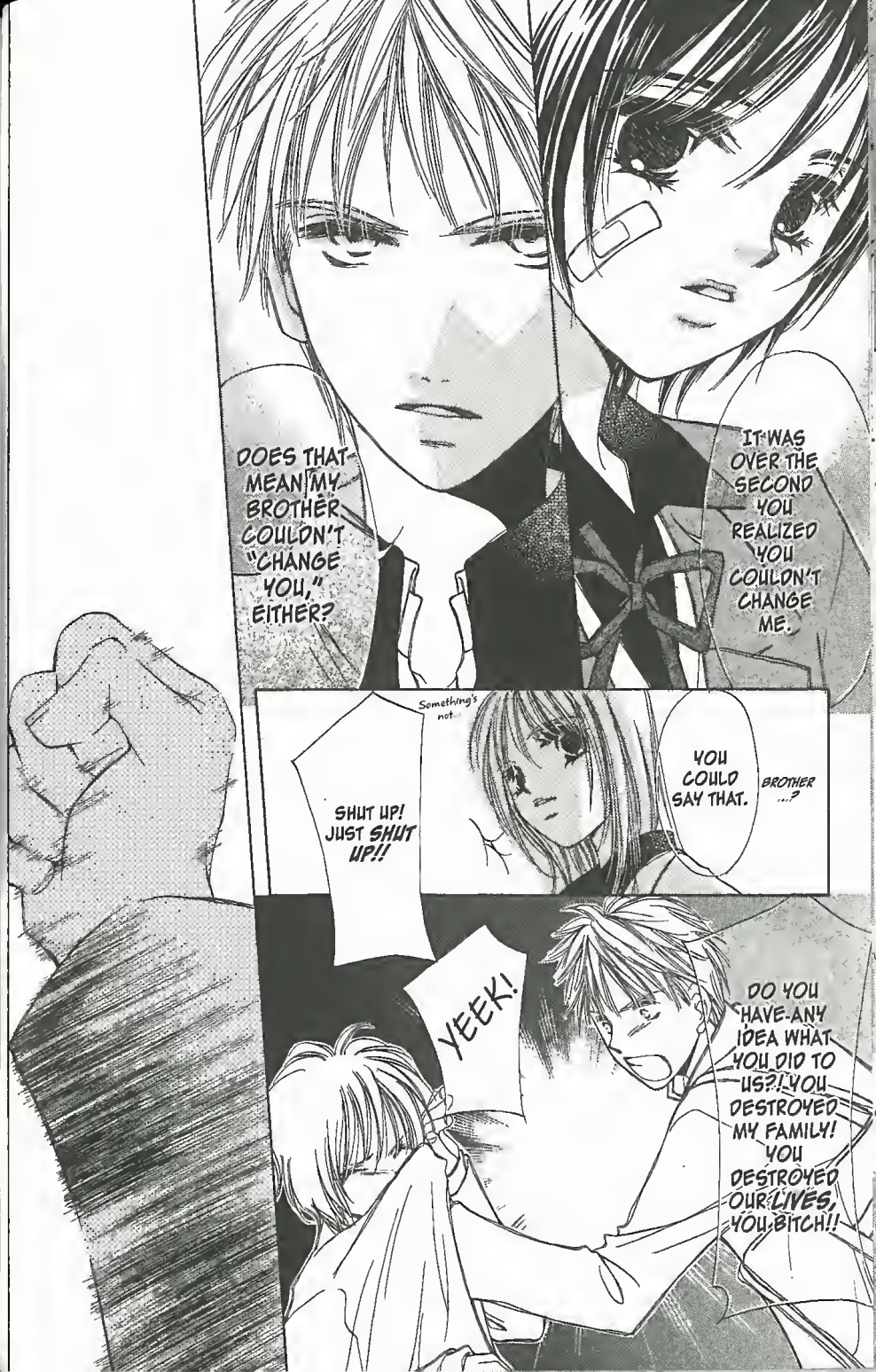
DON'T ASK ME. HE'S A STALKER. DO STALKERS EVER HAVE ANY REAL REASON FOR WHAT THEY DO?
WHY DID HE HIT YOU?
THIS CUT...
...AND THESE BRUISES ARE ALL FROM HIM.
HE ONLY JUST STARTED GETTING VIOLENT. I'M FRIGHTENED.
HE'D FOLLOW ME, TALKING TRASH, AND JUST BOTHERING ME.
OUR BREAK-UP WAS PRETTY BAD, AND HE STARTED HANGING OUT ALONG THE ROUTE I TOOK HOME FROM SCHOOL.
IS HE THE ONE WHO WROTE ON YOUR NOTEBOOK?
HURRY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? HE'S LEAVING!
.....
IT'S ESCA-LATING AND GETTING OUT OF HAND. PUT THE BRAKES ON.
I FIGURE ONCE YOU WORK YOUR MAGIC, HE'LL LEAVE ME ALONE.


GOT SOMETHING TO SAY TO ME?
MIRAI...
YOU ALWAYS TWIST THE TRUTH.
OOH, LIKE A CHALLENGE, DO WE?
DON'T CALL ME THAT. YOU LOST THE RIGHT WHEN YOU SCREWED MY OLDER BROTHER, YOU HAG.

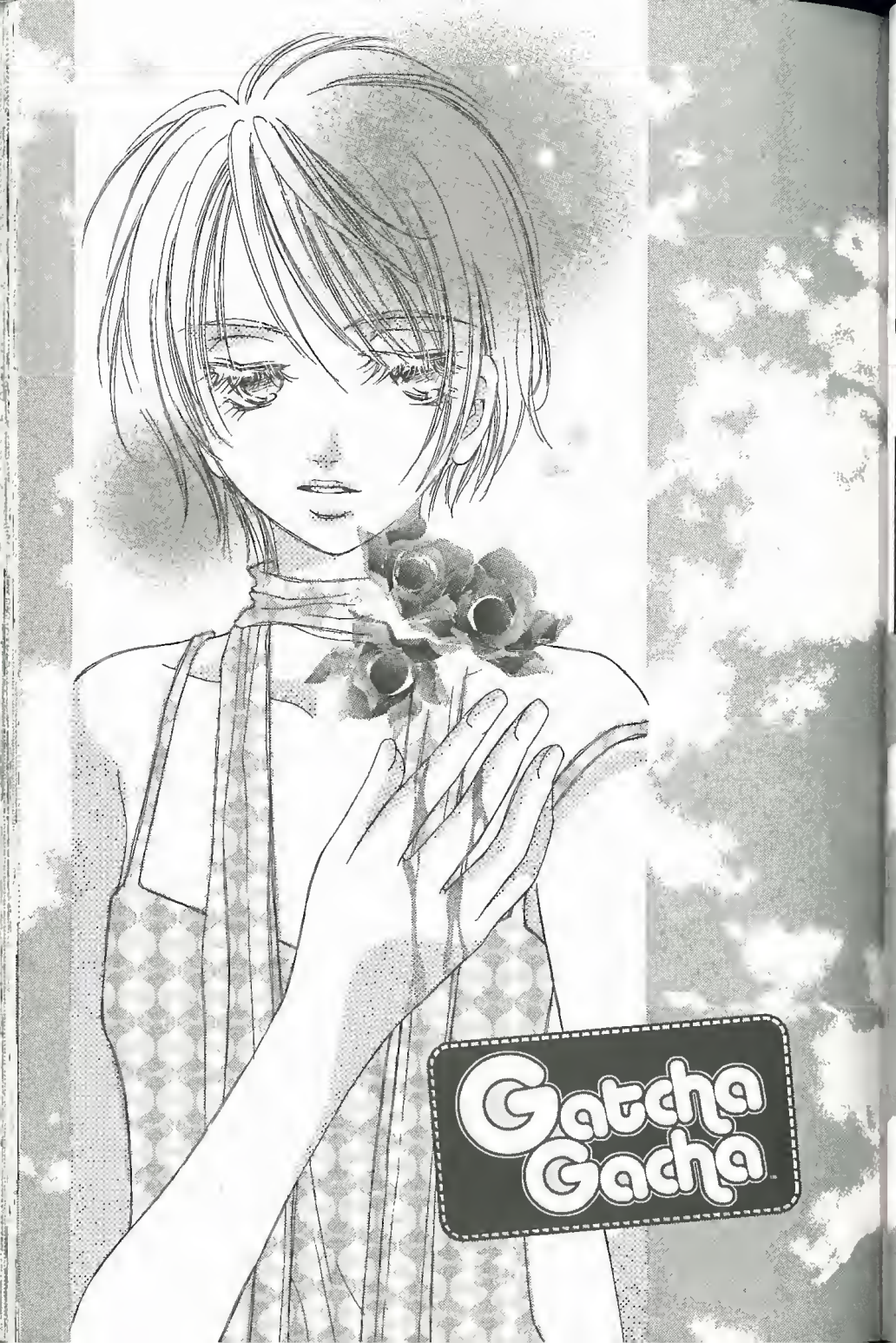
...THE ONLY THING THAT TOUCHED ME...
ON THAT DAY...
"...GOODBYE..."
SONO'OH?
...WAS THE COLOR OF THAT STONE.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HANGING AROUND HERE?

...IT'S ALMOST THE COLOR OF A CLEAR, BLUE SKY.


HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.
?!
DIDN'T ANYONE TELL YOU HITTING GIRLS WITH A CLOSED FIST IS A NO-NO?
WHA--?! PISS OFF! THIS ISN'T ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS!!
BUT YOU KNOW IT'S NOT SO SIM--
SHUT UP!!
MAYBE NOT. I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO TELL YOU SHE DOESN'T DESERVE IT.


DOES THAT MEAN MY BROTHER COULDN'T "CHANGE YOU," EITHER?
IT WAS OVER THE SECOND YOU REALIZED YOU COULDN'T CHANGE ME.
Something's not
YOU COULD SAY THAT.
BROTHER ...?
SHUT UP! JUST SHUT UP!!
YEEK!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU DID TO US?! YOU DESTROYED MY FAMILY! YOU DESTROYED OUR LIVES, YOU BITCH!!

...OF LISTENING TO YOUR YAPPING, YOU WUSS!
I'M ALREADY SICK...
THAT WHORE LET MY BROTHER DIE!
WHAT REASON DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE THAT MURDERER'S SIDE?!
GREAT, THIS AGAIN...?
Aah! My fence!
WHY...?
YOU'VE GOTTA START EATING SOME MEAT, MAN. MEAT'LL PUT SOME MUSCLE ON THOSE BONES.
And exercise, too.
Wow.
SCRAWNY!
KAGU-RAZAKA-SAN...
TRY THIS ON FOR SIZE, BITCH!!
WHERE THE HELL DO YOU GET OFF?! YOU SOME KINDA HERO?
HUH?
AAAH!
THAT'S IT...
GRAB
I'M DONE PLAYING NICE, PIP-SQUEAK!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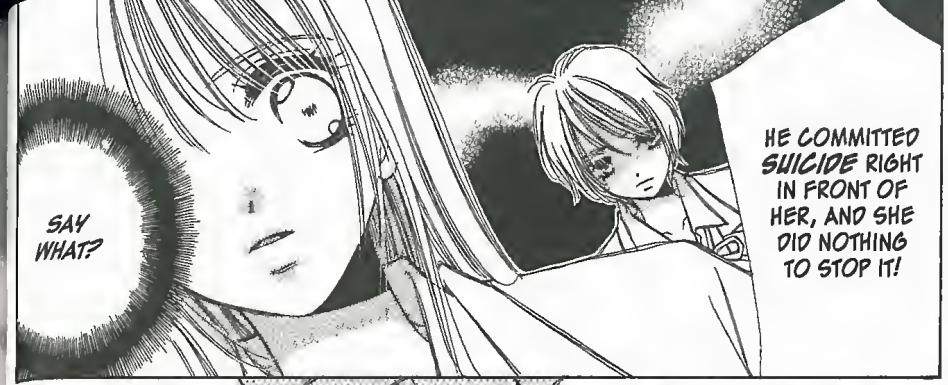
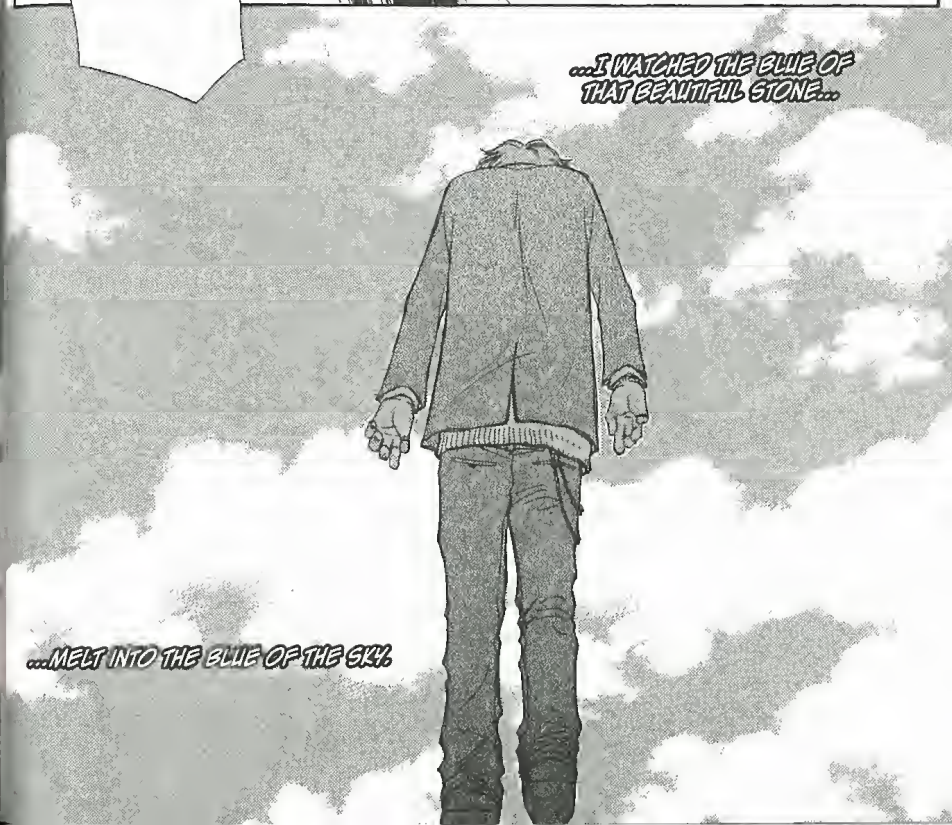
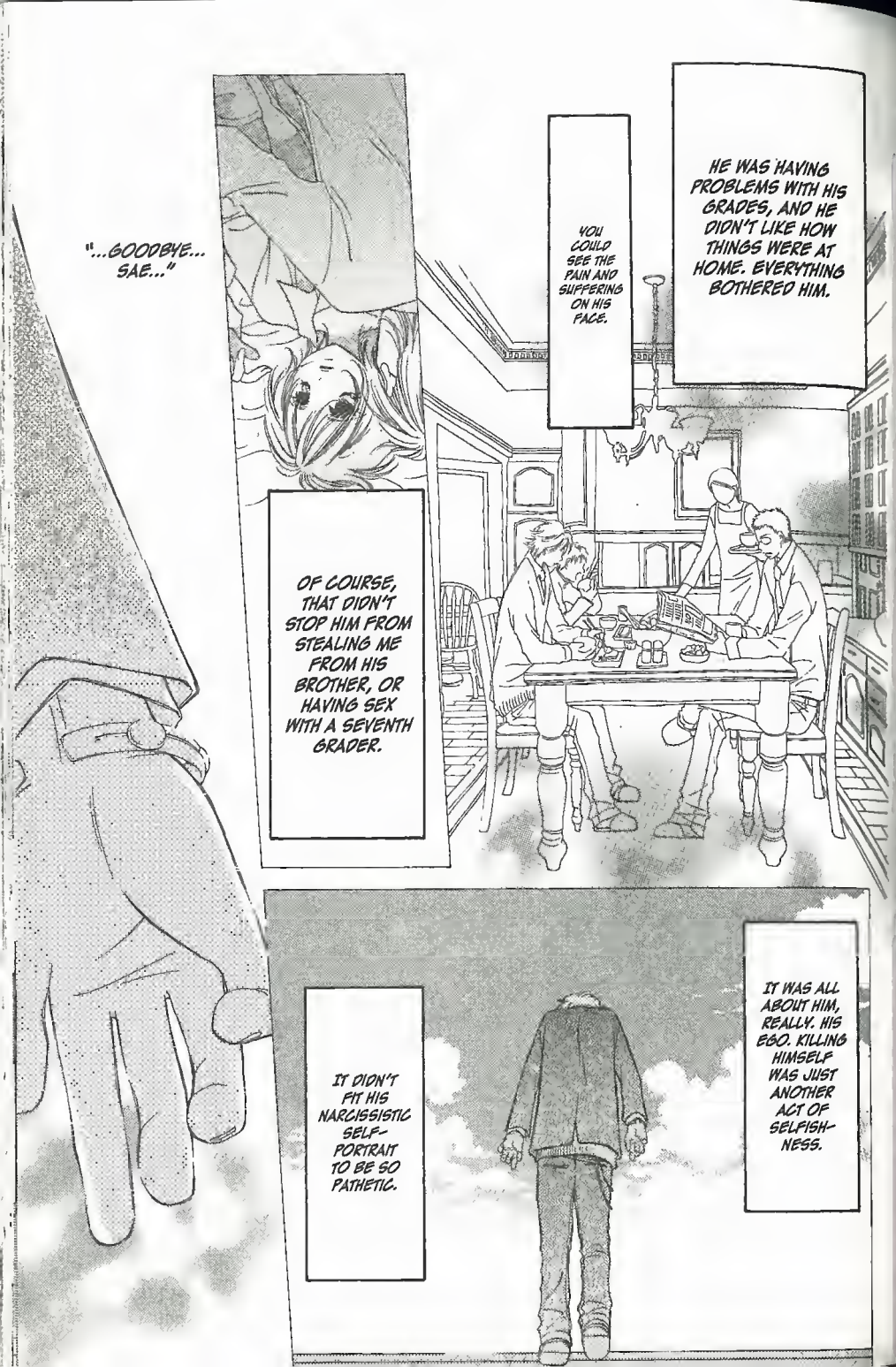

HE COMMITTED SUICIDE RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER, AND SHE DID NOTHING TO STOP IT!
SAY WHAT?

"...GOODBYE...SAE..."
THAT DAY...
SHE DIDN'T EVEN LIFT A FINGER! SHE JUST STOOD BACK AND WATCHED!!


...I WATCHED THE BLUE OF THAT BEAUTIFUL STONE...
...MELT INTO THE BLUE OF THE SKY.


"...GOODBYE... SAE..."
HE WAS HAVING PROBLEMS WITH HIS GRADES, AND HE DIDN'T LIKE HOW THINGS WERE AT HOME. EVERYTHING BOTHERED HIM.
YOU COULD SEE THE PAIN AND SUFFERING ON HIS FACE.
OF COURSE, THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM FROM STEALING ME FROM HIS BROTHER, OR HAVING SEX WITH A SEVENTH GRADER.
IT DIDN'T FIT HIS NARCISSISTIC SELF-PORTRAIT TO BE SO PATHETIC.
IT WAS ALL ABOUT HIM, REALLY. HIS EGO. KILLING HIMSELF WAS JUST ANOTHER ACT OF SELFISHNESS.

HE WAS JUST SOME GUY I HAPPENED TO BE GOING OUT WITH. IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO REALIZE...
...THAT HE WAS STARTING TO FALL APART.
...NEVER...
--OM ME? I...
mutter
mutter
mutter
...DION'T... FAULT.....
!!
mutter
BUT I DIDN'T REALLY CARE...
...SO I JUST LET HIM BE.

Recommended DVD
The Host

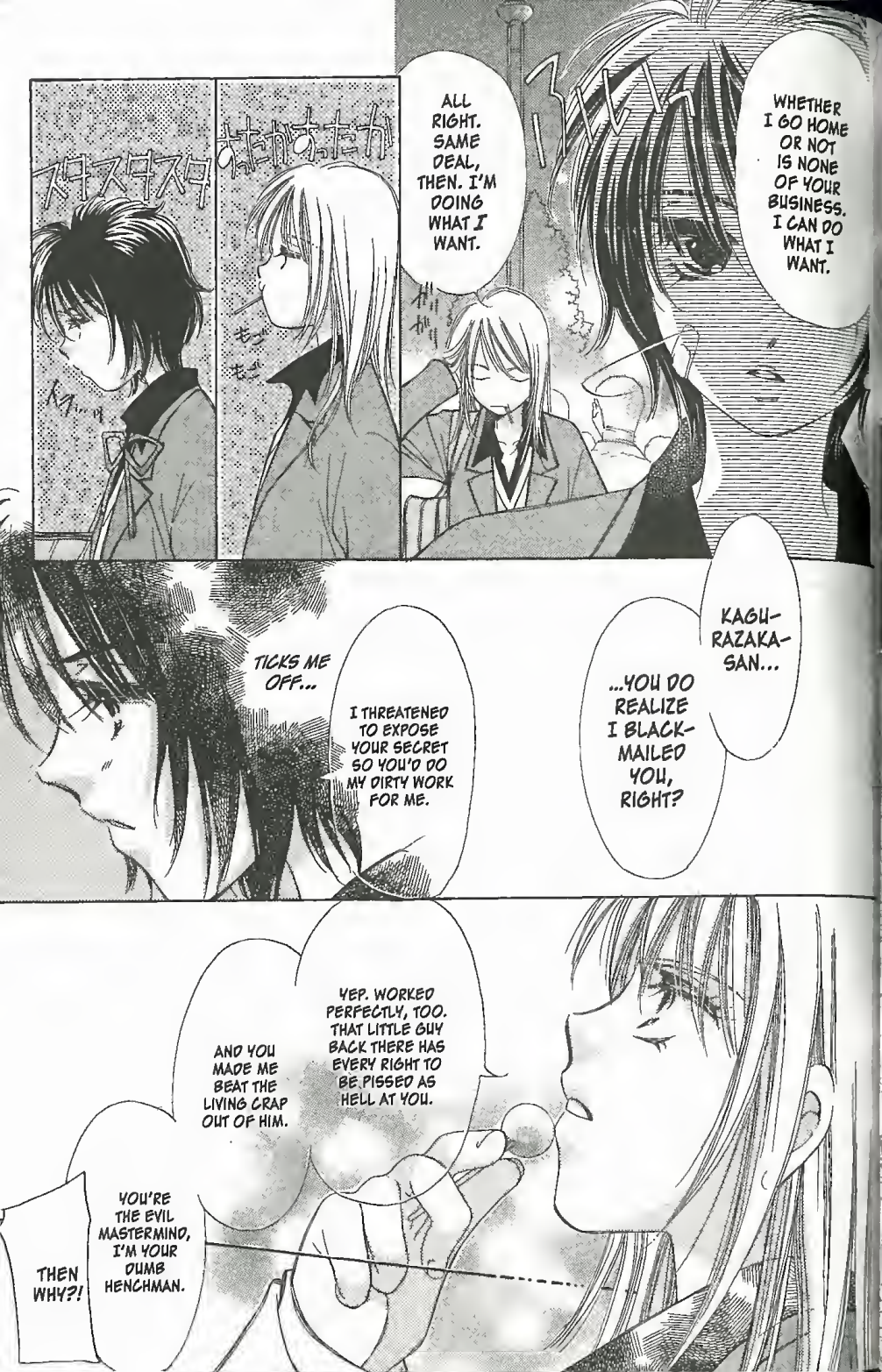
The Host is a Korean monster flick. A mutant suddenly appears out of the Han River in Seoul and kidnaps the daughter (Hyun-seo) of the main character (Gang-du). Gang-du's whole family (him, his father, and his two younger siblings) vow to track down the monster and save Hyun-seo. I really enjoyed director Joon-Ho Bong's earlier movie, *Memories of Murder*, so I snatched up this DVD the moment I saw it. I didn't regret it. *The Host* was way more entertaining than I'd expected. I like how Joon-Ho Bong always manages to make even the most pathetic characters look sympathetic. This movie has laughs and tears, and one really big monster to liven things up. Everybody needs to see it.

WHEN IT HAPPENED, HE WAS WEARING A BRACELET WITH BLUE STONES.
THOSE JEWELS STRUCK ME AS ESPECIALLY BEAUTIFUL.
I WATCHED HIM AS HE STEPPED OFF THE EDGE...
...AND THOSE BEAUTIFUL BLUE STONES MELTED INTO THE SKY.
I KNOW THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME.
IF YOU HAD EVEN BOTHERED TO TRY AND STOP HIM...
...HE WOULDN'T HAVE GONE THROUGH WITH IT. YOU COULD HAVE SAVED HIM!
IS THERE NOTHING OUT THERE THAT CAN MAKE ME FEEL?
I MEAN, I WATCHED MY LOVER THROW HIMSELF OFF THE TOP OF A BUILDING.
THAT LOVER'S YOUNGER BROTHER IS STANDING IN FRONT OF ME, AND I CAN'T SHED A TEAR FOR HIM.
HEAR NOTHING, SEE NOTHING.

INSTEAD, I MERELY GAZE AT THE SKY ABOVE HIS HEAD.
IT'S RED...
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?!
.....
WHY ISN'T IT BLUE...?
WHY YOU...!!
..UGK!!
THWAP
PAY ATTENTION WHEN I'M--
AH!
HEY...
...AGH
...KOFF
...
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO WITH THIS RUNT?
...HUH?
OWOWOW OWOW!
I CAN SMACK HIM AROUND ENOUGH TO KEEP THAT MOUTH OF HIS SHUT FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.
WHAT...?
Leggo! Leggo!
?
WHAT IS SHE DOING...?
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS...?

WHY DO YOU THINK?
NOW, MAKE UP YOUR MIND. PUNCH OR KICK?
MAYBE HALF AND HALF, JUST TO BE SURE.
LET HIM GO.
"...SAVE ME?"
HUH?! LET HIM GO?! BUT I ALREADY FLATTENED HIS ASS!
IT'S ALL SCREWED UP.
IT'S WHAT YOU WANTED ME TO DO, RIGHT?

I NEVER HAD ANY INTENTION OF KEEPING QUIET ABOUT THAT, YOU KNOW.
IF--IF, MIND YOU--IF IT EVER GOT OUT THAT THE ONE BEHIND ALL THE TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENING TO THE GIRLS AROUND YOU IS REALLY YOUR SISTER, KANAKO-SAN...
WHY...?
SHE HEARD WHAT HE SAID! NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, I'M THE BAD GUY HERE!
?!
WHATEVER.
WHY DID YOU AGREE TO HELP IN THE FIRST PLACE...?
WHAT? BUT THEN...
IF YOU'D RATHER DO IT, BE MY GUEST. THE TWERP IS ALL YOURS.
DOES IT MATTER? IT'S NOT LIKE THIS WIENER DOESN'T DESERVE A LITTLE PUNISHMENT.
DON'T YOU CARE?! WEREN'T YOU DOING THIS JUST TO SHUT ME UP?!


スタスタスタ
ALL RIGHT. SAME DEAL, THEN. I'M DOING WHAT I WANT.
WHETHER I GO HOME OR NOT IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS. I CAN DO WHAT I WANT.
TICKS ME OFF...
I THREATENED TO EXPOSE YOUR SECRET SO YOU'D DO MY DIRTY WORK FOR ME.
...YOU DO REALIZE I BLACK-MAILED YOU, RIGHT?
KAGU-RAZAKA-SAN...
YEP. WORKED PERFECTLY, TOO. THAT LITTLE GUY BACK THERE HAS EVERY RIGHT TO BE PISSED AS HELL AT YOU.
AND YOU MADE ME BEAT THE LIVING CRAP OUT OF HIM.
YOU'RE THE EVIL MASTERMIND, I'M YOUR DUMB HENCHMAN.
THEN WHY?!

MY PLAN...THIS GIRL...EVERYTHING... IT'S TOTALLY, COMPLETELY, IRREDEEMABLY SCREWED UP!
NO, THAT'S ENOUGH. WE'RE DONE.
カツカツ
I TOLD YOU WE'RE DONE!!
WHY THE HELL ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?!
IF WE'RE DONE, THEN WHY AREN'T YOU GOING HOME?

SCHOOL CAFETERIA REVOLUTION, PT.1

A little while ago, I was watching a documentary on TV that shocked me so badly, I thought my hair might fall out from the surprise. The documentary was about a cook in one particular country who got so fed up with how terrible school cafeteria food was that he decided to try and reform the cafeteria system across the whole country.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Those schools fed the kids nothing but total junk food! They didn't even bother putting lettuce on the hamburgers! The kids, seeing that their parents weren't going to say anything, took complete advantage. They loaded their plates with French fries and other microwaveable, "processed food product" side dishes that look like they're made of stuff you should be feeding to chickens! (All the yummy-looking fresh fruits and veggies were thrown away by the handful.)

And the adults are just making excuses, saying it's "not right to force the kids to eat what they don't want to." The morons...the total morons...!! (If you don't make the kids eat healthy food, they're just going to grow up stupider than you are!)

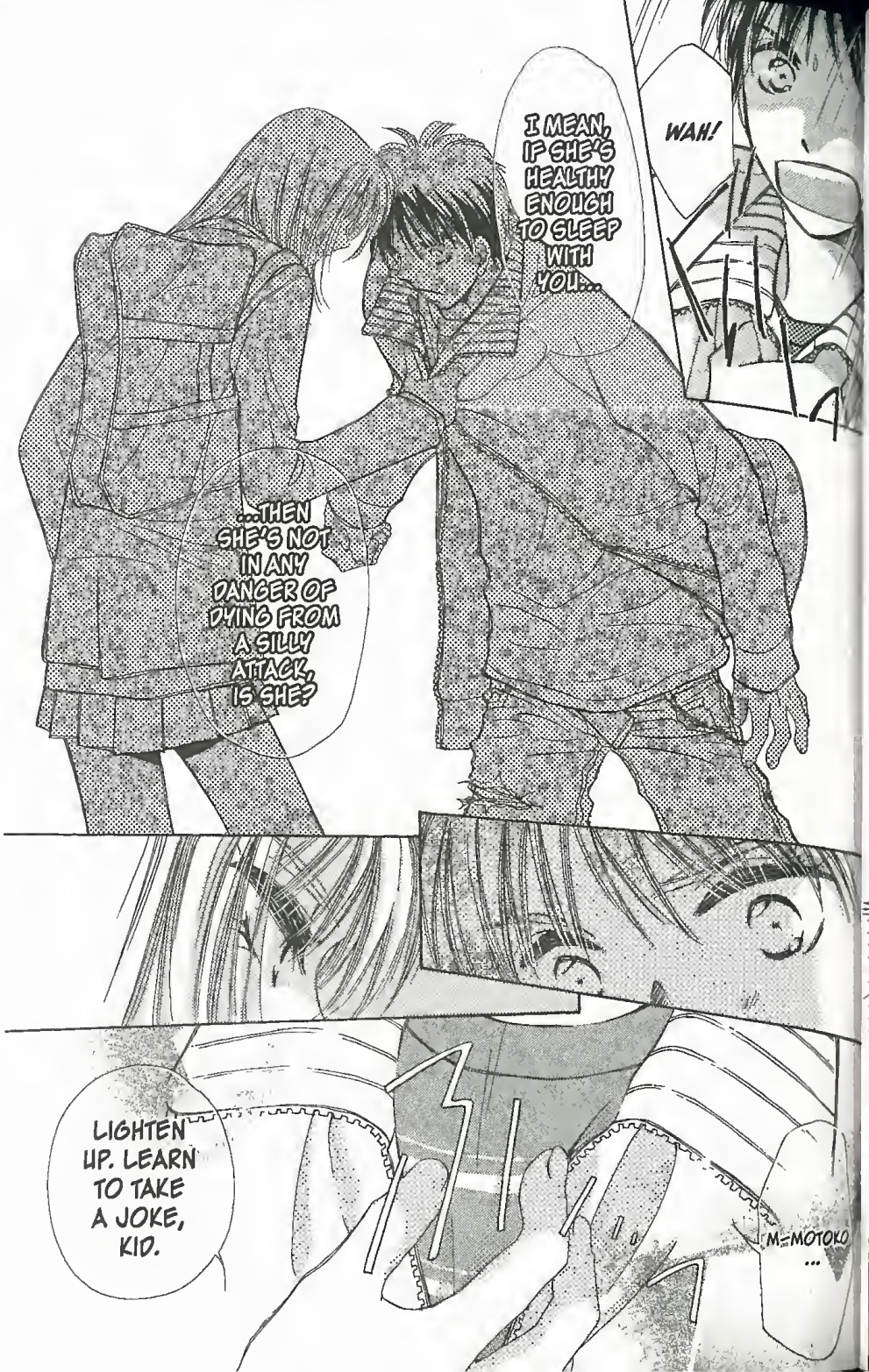
Okay, one important point--I'm not getting so mad about this because I love kids, or because impressionable kids are being taken advantage of. No, I have a much simpler, and less altruistic reason for it.

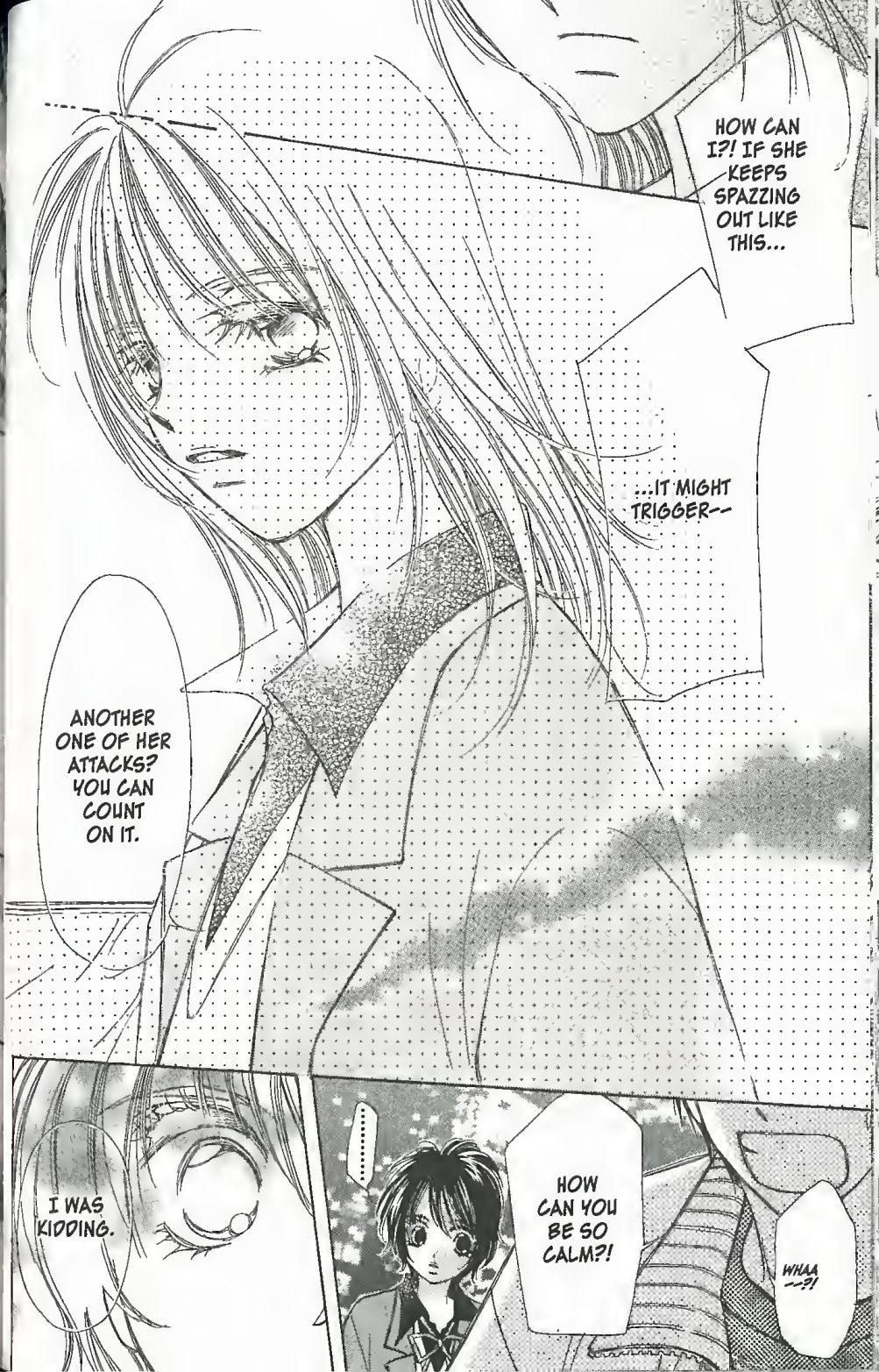
Continued in the next Freetalk...

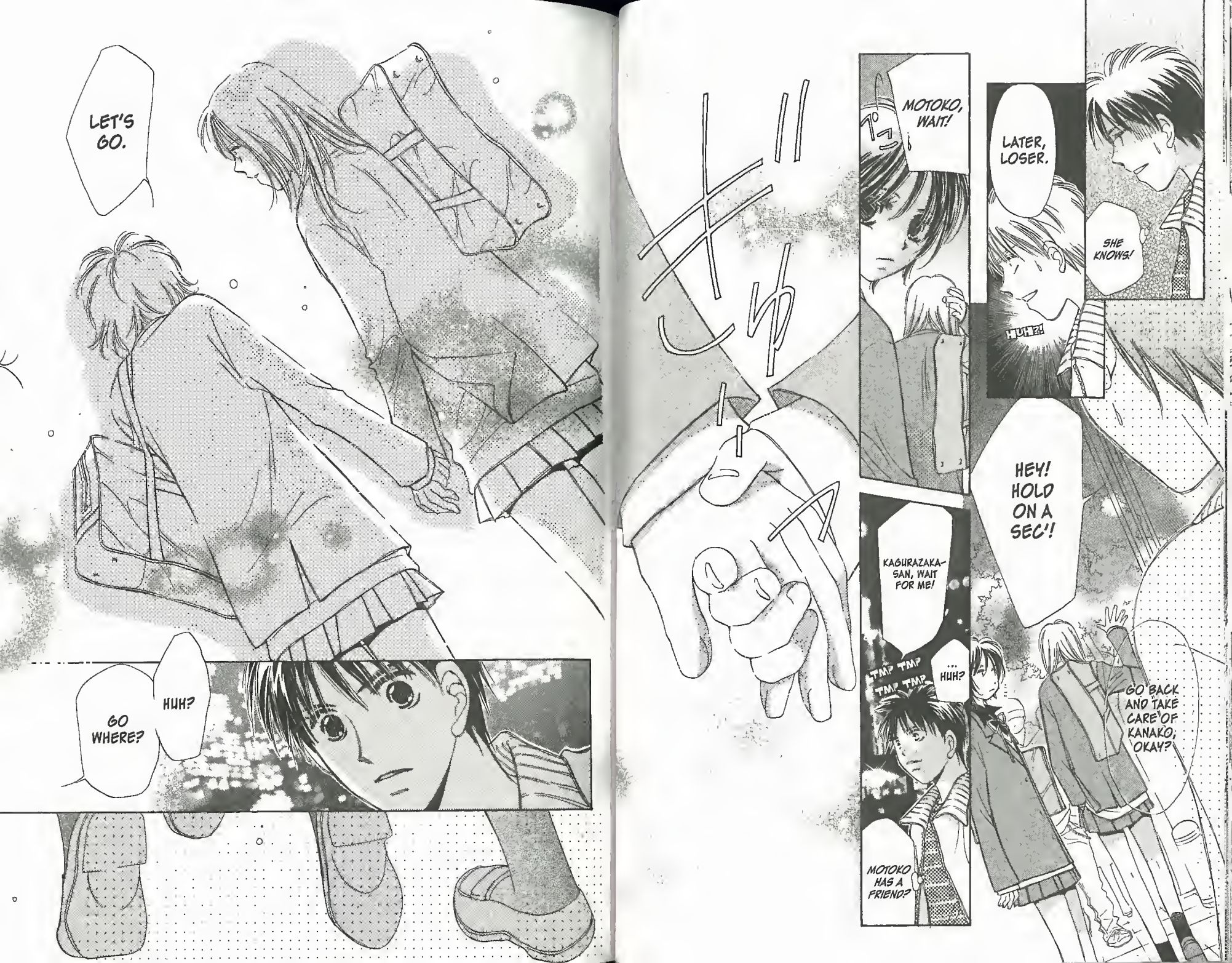
?!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING WANDERING AROUND OUT HERE AT THIS HOUR?!
YABE...?
YOU CALL THAT "NORMAL"?! YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT HER! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN!
SOUNDS LIKE A NORMAL EVENING, THEN.
See my face? She did that!
KANAKO-SAN IS GOING BERSERK!
JUST IGNORE HER, DUDE.
NOBODY CAN CALM HER DOWN. SHE'S NEAR HYSTERICAL WORRYING ABOUT YOU, AND SHE'S TAKING OUT ALL HER ANGER ON THE GRANNIES.

STARE
Ooh, short shorts!
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?!
OH, SORRY. DON'T WORRY, I HEARD EVERY WORD YOU SAID.
IT TICKS ME OFF...
...WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY WASN'T NEARLY AS INTERESTING AS THOSE HOT SHORTS ON THAT GIRL.
IT'S JUST...
...BUT WHY IS IT TICKING ME OFF?
MOTOKO!!
WHY AM I...?

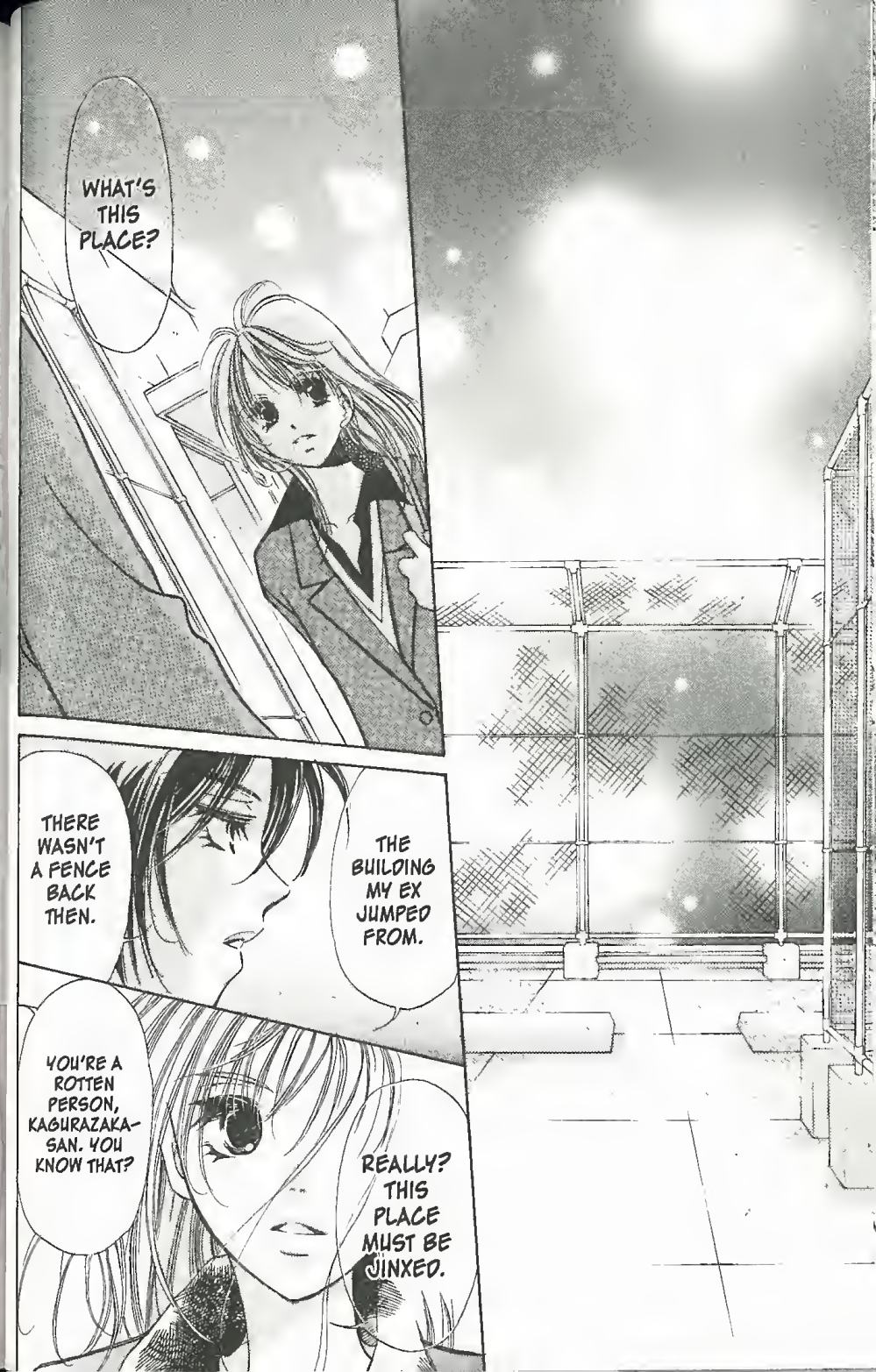
IF YOU REALIZED WHAT WAS GOING ON, WHY THE HELL DID YOU GO THROUGH WITH IT?!
I LIED TO YOU! HE NEVER HIT ME! I JUST PUT ON SOME BAND-AIDS TO TRICK YOU INTO HELPING ME!
SHE TICKS ME OFF! THIS WHOLE FARCE TICKS ME OFF!!
DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU MAD?!


I MEAN, IF SHE'S HEALTHY ENOUGH TO SLEEP WITH YOU...
WAH!
...THEN SHE'S NOT IN ANY DANGER OF DYING FROM A SILLY ATTACK, IS SHE?
LIGHTEN UP. LEARN TO TAKE A JOKE, KID.
M-MOTOKO ...


HOW CAN I?! IF SHE KEEPS SPAZZING OUT LIKE THIS...
...IT MIGHT TRIGGER--
ANOTHER ONE OF HER ATTACKS? YOU CAN COUNT ON IT.
I WAS KIDDING.
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM?!
WHAA --?!

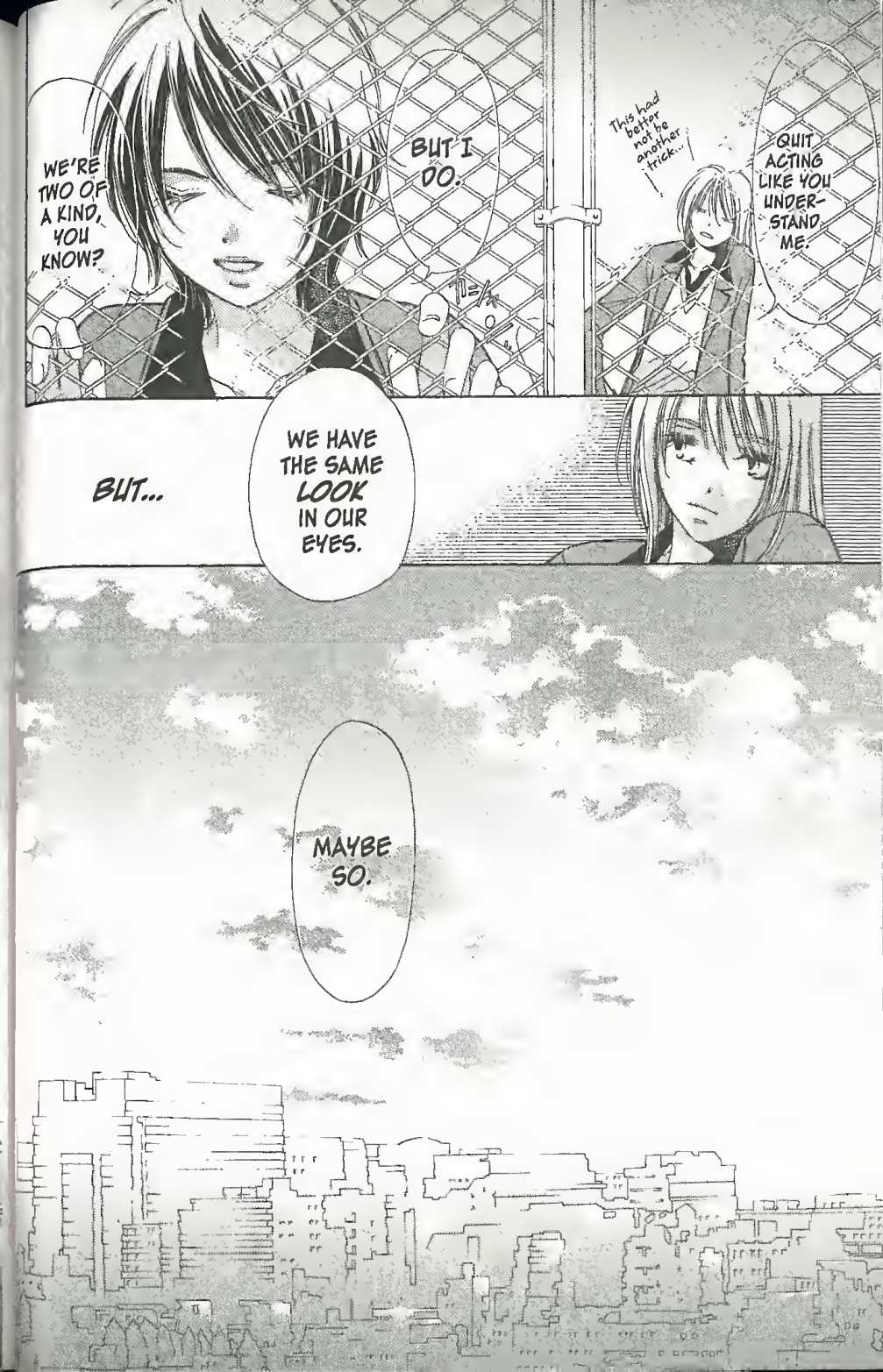

LET'S GO.
HUH?
GO WHERE?
GO BACK AND TAKE CARE OF KANAKO, OKAY?
HEY! HOLD ON A SEC'!
LATER, LOSER.
HUH?!
SHE KNOWS!
MOTOKO, WAIT!
KAGURAZAKA-SAN, WAIT FOR ME!
TMP TMP TMP TMP
...HUH?
MOTOKO HAS A FRIEND?

YEAH.
IT'S KIND OF A RELIEF, ACTUALLY.
WHAT, YOU JUST NOTICED NOW?
NOT BY A LONG SHOT.
IT REMINDED ME THAT WE AREN'T THE ONLY UGLY, EVIL THINGS IN THE WORLD.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE'S ME. I STOOD BACK AND WATCHED AS MY BOYFRIEND COMMITTED SUICIDE. AM I REALLY ANY DIFFERENT THAN THOSE AIRHEADS?
I MEAN, ON ONE HAND, YOU HAVE A PAIR OF GIRLS WHO GO ON AND ON ABOUT HOW A CHEESY, OVERDONE TV DRAMA OPENED THEIR EYES TO THE VALUE OF LIFE WHILE WALKING RIGHT BY SOMEONE WHO'S HOMELESS AND DYING, IGNORING HIM LIKE SO MUCH GARBAGE IN THE GUTTER.
AT THEIR CORE, EVERY-BODY'S CRUEL.
EVERYBODY LOVES TO THINK THAT THEY'RE A GOOD PERSON, WHEN REALLY EVERYONE IS TWISTED AND SELFISH.

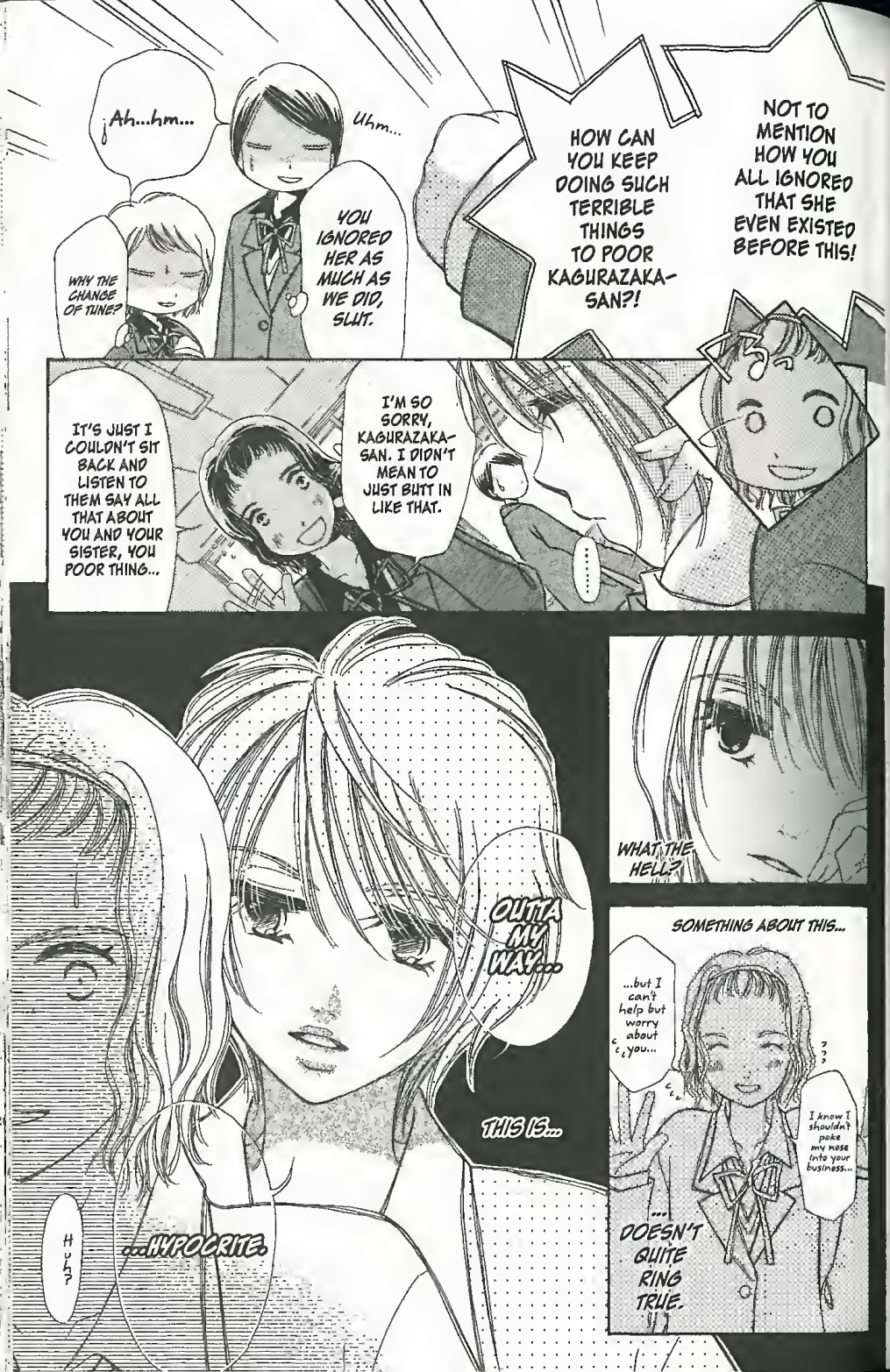

WHAT'S THIS PLACE?
THERE WASN'T A FENCE BACK THEN.
THE BUILDING MY EX JUMPED FROM.
YOU'RE A ROTTEN PERSON, KAGURAZAKA-SAN. YOU KNOW THAT?
REALLY? THIS PLACE MUST BE JINXED.

"AT THEIR CORE, EVERYBODY'S CRUEL."
THAT'S WHY IT NEVER BOTHERED ME WHEN PEOPLE HATED ME ENOUGH TO ATTACK ME.
ONCE I REALIZED THAT, I STARTED LIVING EACH DAY BY KILLING ANOTHER TINY PIECE OF MY HEART.
WHAT GOOD IS A MORALITY BUILT ON A FOUNDATION OF FILTH?
I DUNNO. IT REQUIRES AT LEAST SOME SELFISHNESS TO SURVIVE. THAT'S JUST LIFE.
BUT...
Mind if I sit?
GSH.
...THERE ARE A SELECT AND RARE FEW WHO AREN'T LIKE THAT.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE FEW, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
WHAT? ME?!
KAGU-RAZAKA-SAN?
I COULDN'T BE MORE WRONG.
Oh.
THAT'S WHY I HATE YOU SO MUCH.
WHICH ONE? WHICH OF THE TWO...
...DO YOU LOVE MORE?
...
WHICH ONE? DUDE, BEING STUCK WITH EITHER WOULD SUCK.
REALLY?
DOES THAT MEAN YOU WISH THEY WERE DEAD?
THAT...
...WOULD SUCK EVEN WORSE.
THE UGLY TRUTH IS THAT THE TRUTH IS UGLY.

WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES THE SKY BLUE? DO YOU EVER WONDER?
IT'S ALL THE MINUTE DUST PARTICLES IN THE ATMOSPHERE REFLECTING THE SUN'S RAYS...OR SUCH IS OUR GUESS...
...THERE IS ALSO SOMETHING DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT ABOUT US.
SEE?
HEY, THINGS ARE THE WAY THEY ARE BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT HE WANTED, RIGHT?
GRIN


WE'RE TWO OF A KIND, YOU KNOW?
BUT I DO.
This had better not be another trick...!
QUIT ACTING LIKE YOU UNDER-STAND ME.
BUT...
WE HAVE THE SAME LOOK IN OUR EYES.
MAYBE SO.

"I KNOW BRACELETS AREN'T REALLY YOUR THING, BUT...HERE."
"YEAH, I DON'T LIKE WEARING JEWELRY."
"I KNOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WEAR IT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO."
GOD, THIS SUCKS.
BUT I MAY HAVE BEEN EVEN DUMBER THAN I THOUGHT.
"A BIRTHDAY PRESENT...?"
"BUT, IF YOU LIKE ME EVEN A LITTLE BIT, WHY DON'T YOU TRY PUTTING IT ON EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE?"
I STILL CAN'T CRY.
NOT EVEN NOW.
IT WAS A LONG TIME BEFORE I SAW SAE SONO'OH AGAIN.
AFTER THAT, THE DAYS PASSED IN A WHIRLWIND OF BLEAK EVENTS.
WE ARE DIFFERENT, YOU AND I.
HE? "HE" WHO?
...I'VE ALWAYS BEEN STUPID.
THAT'S WHY IT MADE SENSE TO GO OUT WITH A GUY AS STUPID AS THE JUMPER.
I need shut-eye.
VERY, VERY DIFFERENT.
FOR-GET IT.
IT'S DAWN. WE'D BETTER GET HOME.
YOU KNOW...
YOU SOUND LIKE A YAKUZA LEAVING A CRIME SCENE.


¡Ah...hm...
Uhm...
WHY THE CHANGE OF TUNE?
YOU IGNORED HER AS MUCH AS WE DID, SLUT.
HOW CAN YOU KEEP DOING SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS TO POOR KAGURAZAKA-SAN?!
NOT TO MENTION HOW YOU ALL IGNORED THAT SHE EVEN EXISTED BEFORE THIS!
IT'S JUST I COULDN'T SIT BACK AND LISTEN TO THEM SAY ALL THAT ABOUT YOU AND YOUR SISTER, YOU POOR THING...
I'M SO SORRY, KAGURAZAKA-SAN. I DIDN'T MEAN TO JUST BUTT IN LIKE THAT.
WHAT THE HELL?
SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...
...but I can't help but worry about you...
I know I shouldn't poke my nose into your business...
...DOESN'T QUITE RING TRUE.
OUTTA MY WAY...
THIS IS...
...HYPOCRITE.
HUH?

¡HOW FREAKY!
NOBODY KNOWS FOR SURE.
IT'S LIKE A MOVIE! ROMANCE GONE BAD!
YOU GIRLS STOP THAT!
STILL, THEY'RE ALMOST HALF-RIGHT...
OH, SHUT UP.
HEY, HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEW RUMOR?
KAGURAZAKA-SAN'S SISTER STABBED YABE-SENPAI.
GET OUT! IS THAT WHY SHE KILLED HERSELF, THEN?
HER SISTER JUST DIED, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! SHE'S MISERABLE RIGHT NOW!
STOP SPREADING AROUND BASELESS RUMORS LIKE THAT WHEN KAGURAZAKA-SAN IS IN EARSHOT!
CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S HURTING HER?!

Hey, now...
MAYBE NOT. BUT IT *IS* YOUR FAULT MY MOUTH IS MORE FOUL THAN IT USED TO BE.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HOLDING UP A LOT BETTER THAN EXPECTED. I'M GLAD.
...HUH?
WELL, I'D BETTER GET GOING.
I ONLY STOPPED BY TO SAY GOODBYE, AFTER ALL.
HUH? GOODBYE?
YEAH. I'M TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT SCHOOL.

I GUESS THAT'S THE END OF MY GOOD-GIRL IMAGE. THANKS TO THE INFLUENCE OF A CERTAIN SOMEBODY I WON'T NAME...
...THAT'S BEEN BLOWN SKY-HIGH.
WHAT? YOU'RE SAYING THIS IS ALL *MY* FAULT?
I SAID MOVE, BITCH!
YOU'RE PISSING ME OFF!!
UM... SONO'OH-SAN...?
What?
Did she just...?
SMILE
YEAH, I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.
SEEING THE LITTLE FAKER PREACH LIKE THAT MADE ME SEE HOW STUPID IT WAS.
NOT REALLY. I WAS GETTING SICK OF KEEPING UP THE CHARADE, ANYWAY.

...SAE SONO'OH DIS-APPEARED FROM MY LIFE, AND I HADN'T SEEN HER SINCE.
TA-TA!
IT'S THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO TO PISS YOU OFF.
WITH THAT FOR A PARTING MEMORY...
YOU SHOULD'VE AT LEAST TRADED CELL NUMBERS, KAGURAZAKA-SAN!
HOW DID YOU AND THAT PRETTY GIRL EVER GET ALONG, ANYWAY?
Yeesh!
I WOULDN'T CALL IT "GETTING ALONG."
Not really...

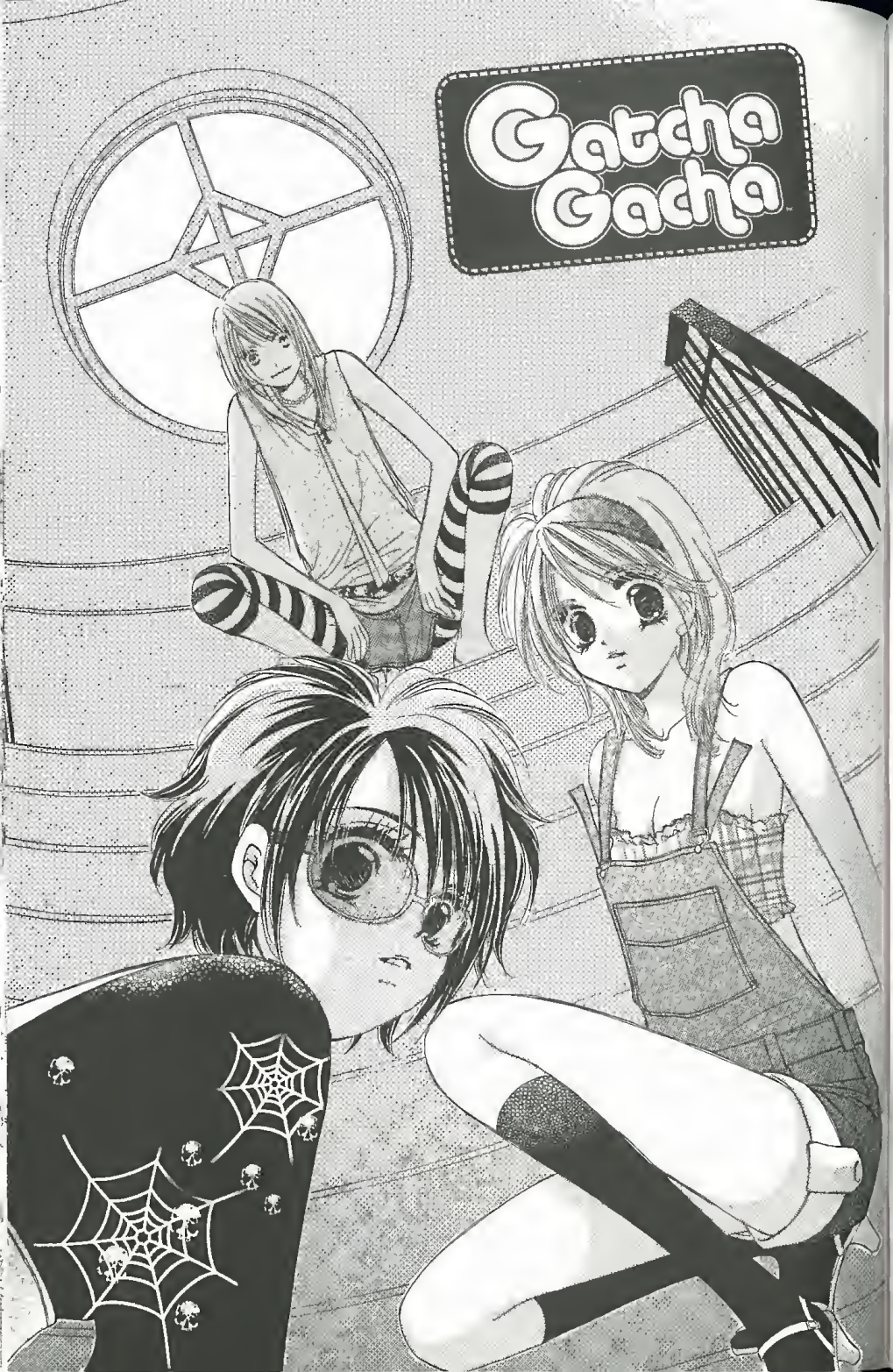
WHAT?
SHOOP

HOWEVER...
THE DUST IN THE ATMOSPHERE REFLECTS THE SUN'S RAYS, MAKING THE SKY LOOK BLUE.
THE SEA LOOKS BLUE BECAUSE IT MIRRORS THE BLUE SKY.
HOW'D HE EVER PASS THE ENTRANCE EXAMS FOR SCHOOL?
Bacteria?
BECAUSE OF THE BACTERIA IN THE AIR OR SOMETHING...
How should I know?!
YOU'VE TURNED INTO A REAL FREAKIN' FREAK, YOU KNOW THAT?
"HEY, THINGS ARE THE WAY THEY ARE BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT HE WANTED, RIGHT?"
.....

Hmmm
IT WAS MORE LIKE...
HEY!
...WE WERE CELL-MATES IN THE SAME PRISON.
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT PRISON IS LIKE KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN?!
I'M FREEZING MY BUTT OFF.
IT'S GETTING PRETTY FRIKKIN' COLD OUT. WHY DON'T WE GO HOME?
HEY...
ANSWER ME.
WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?! WHO THE HELL CARES?!
SAY WHAT?!
WHY DO YOU THINK THE SKY IS BLUE?
SAY...
C'MON, LET'S GO ALREADY!

IT'S JUST THE SAND...
OH, NOW I REMEMBER!
I KNEW THAT GIRL REMINDED ME OF SOMEONE!
How she is, not how she looks.
SO... AH...
NEVER MIND. IT'S NOT IMPORTANT, AND I DON'T WANT TO RISK THE PENALTY OF BEING WRONG...BRR...
OKAY.
Kagurazaka-san! Wait up!
INTIMIDATION?
BEEEEE...

THE SAND...!
OW!
HEY, YOU OKAY?
DON'T ASK, JUST HELP ME!
"WHO SAID SHE WAS MY FRIEND?"
"THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF A FRIEND."
THIS IS NOTHING...
THE SAND JUST STINGS...


Gatcha Gacha

ALL THOSE MODELS AND POP IDOLS MOST NUMBSKULLS GET ALL EXCITED OVER ARE TOO SCRAWNY. NO MUSCLE, NOTHING TO GRAB ONTO. THEIR CATFIGHTS WOULD SUCK.
YEAH, BIG TITS AND A TIGHT WAIST. THOSE MAKE A REAL WOMAN.
Too much activity and they start fainting and shaking.
THERE'S THOSE FOUR, AND THEN THERE IS THIS PERSON, WHOSE TRUE GENDER IS A MYSTERY FOR THE AGES.
IF YOU'RE REALLY THAT ENAMORED WITH THOSE D-CUPS, WHY DON'T YOU JUST BUY THAT MAGAZINE?
WE COULD HAVE A PREVIOUSLY UNDISCOVERED FIFTH "NONE OF THE ABOVE" CATEGORY.
INSTANT ANSWER
SUCKS TO BE YOU, THEN. DON'T IT?
WISH
CUZ I'M BROKE!

A-KO KOIKE'S D-CUPS SURE ARE A WONDERFUL SIGHT TO BEHOLD.
BROADLY SPEAKING, THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD: GUYS WHO LIKE GIRLS, GIRLS WHO LIKE GUYS...
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE SEPARATE AND BEAUTIFUL CREATURES THAT EXIST INDEPENDENTLY OF HER.
...GUYS WHO LIKE GUYS, AND GIRLS WHO LIKE GIRLS.
A producer who loves catfights, and a director who always casts big-breasted women...
OR A TRILOGY. EVEN BETTER. PRODUCED BY SAM RAIMI... DIRECTED BY RUSS MEYER...
I WISH SOMEBODY'D MAKE A MOVIE WITH THOSE TWO. A HARDCORE, MUD-WRESTLING, MANIAC AMAZON, PRISON-BREAK MOVIE.
AKI HOSHINO'S TITS AREN'T BAD, EITHER.

Hey, isn't Meyer dead...?

Recommended DVD
A History of Violence

Now that I think about it, I keep recommending movies in this volume of the series that kids really shouldn't be watching. Directed by David Cronenberg, starring Viggo Mortensen and Ed Harris, this movie in particular is overrun with very realistic portrayals of violence. Just watching it is painful (uh, so what's the movie's story, eh?).

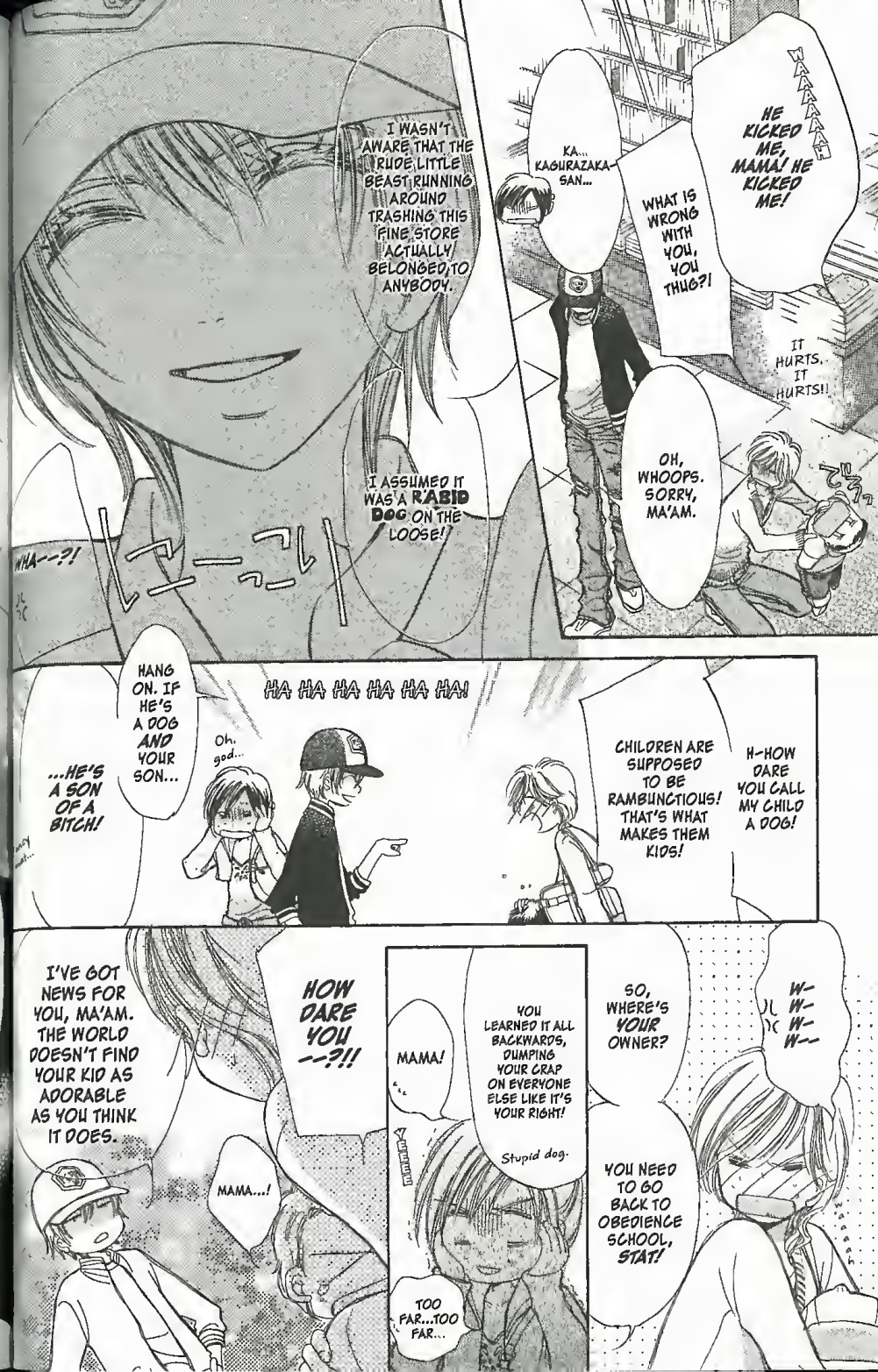
Of course, it has both of my adored actors, Viggo and Ed, so I bought the DVD instantaneously (don't you think those two look awfully alike?).

QUIT IT, BRAT.
WAP
HUH...?
WHA--?!
YOU'RE BUGGING ME.
ゴロゴロゴロ
AAAAAAAAAAA--
WAAAAAAAHHH!!!
MAMA!!!
OH, MY GOD! HIRO-KUN!
ÄAOUPH!!

SILENCE
THAT'S TOTAL BULL! I GAVE THEM ALL THE MONEY THEY WANTED AND THEY WALKED ALL OVER ME!
BESIDES, YOU STILL HAVEN'T PAID ME BACK FROM WHEN I BOUGHT THOSE FISH SAUSAGES FOR YOU!
HE'S ONE PRETTY DUDE.
POOR GIRL, GETTING CHEWED OUT BY HER BOYFRIEND LIKE THAT.
Just lend me a little...
MEN HATE A PENNY PINCHER. THAT'S WHY THEY ALWAYS DUMP YOUR ASS!
OH, COME ON! DON'T BE SO STINGY!

VBEEP!
OUTTA MY WAY, OLD LADY!
BEHAVE YOURSELF, HIRO-KUN.
YEAH, YEAH!
I'LL PAY YOU BACK IN ONE LUMP SUM, OKAY?
I'M NOT YOUR BOYFRIEND, SO THERE'S NO ADVANTAGE HERE!
HA HA!
YEAH, RIGHT

South Park
Lord of the Rock
NOT ONLY THAT...
...THERE ARE THINGS IN THIS WORLD--I CALL THEM "WILD DOGS"--THAT HAVE AN INSTINCT THAT COMPELS THEM TO REACH OUT AND BITE PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF AGE.
IF YOU REALLY DO CARE ABOUT THAT BRAT SO MUCH, DON'T GIVE A WILD DOG AN EXCUSE TO CHOMP DOWN. KNOW WHAT'M SAYIN'?
WILD DOG
STICK TO THE RULES OF POLITE SOCIETY...
...AND THE CANINES WILL NEVER HAVE A REASON TO ATTACK.
SHE LEARNS PHILOSOPHY FROM YAKUZA MOVIES.
...EXCUSE ME. W-WHAT'S GOING ON?
UH... UHM...
It's all twisted


I WASN'T AWARE THAT THE RUDE, LITTLE BEAST RUNNING AROUND TRASHING THIS FINE STORE ACTUALLY BELONGED TO ANYBODY.
I ASSUMED IT WAS A RABID DOG ON THE LOOSE!
WHA--?!
KA... KAGURAZAKA-SAN...
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU, YOU THUG?!
HE KICKED ME, MAMA! HE KICKED ME!
IT HURTS.. IT HURTS!!
OH, WHOOPS. SORRY, MA'AM.
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
HANG ON. IF HE'S A DOG AND YOUR SON...
...HE'S A SON OF A BITCH!
Oh. god...
CHILDREN ARE SUPPOSED TO BE RAMBUNCTIOUS! THAT'S WHAT MAKES THEM KIDS!
H-HOW DARE YOU CALL MY CHILD A DOG!
I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU, MA'AM. THE WORLD DOESN'T FIND YOUR KID AS ADORABLE AS YOU THINK IT DOES.
HOW DARE YOU --?!!
MAMA...!
MAMA!
YOU LEARNED IT ALL BACKWARDS, DUMPING YOUR CRAP ON EVERYONE ELSE LIKE IT'S YOUR RIGHT!
Stupid dog.
TOO FAR...TOO FAR...
SO, WHERE'S YOUR OWNER?
YOU NEED TO GO BACK TO OBEDIENCE SCHOOL, STAT!
W-W-W-W--

MOTOKO DITCHED YOU?
Big shock!
HA HA...
I HAD PLANS TO GO SHOPPING WITH HER TODAY.
But she's M.I.A.!
COME AGAIN?!
YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY?!
You retard!
NO, NO. I'M COOL WITH IT.
What'd you say?
HM?
YOU USED TO WEAR FRILLIER, GIRLIER STUFF.
EVERYBODY LOVES THAT LITTLE TWERP.
I've never seen you in shorts.
I WAS TRYING TO DRESS MORE LIKE THAT YURI MUROI GIRL.
じー
IT WORKS IN MY FAVOR. IT'S RARE I GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAZE UPON LEGS AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOURS.
YOUR TASTE IN CLOTHING ISN'T THE SAME AS IN THE OLD DAYS.

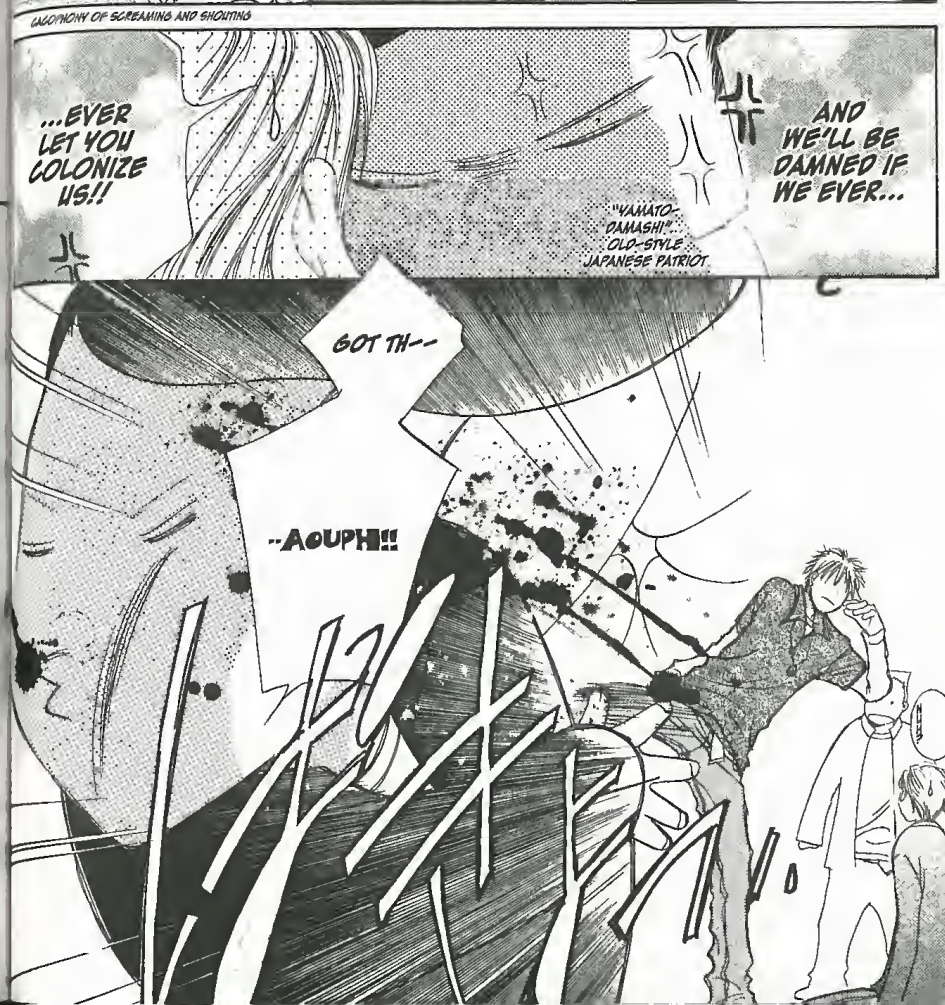
YOU HAVE TO HELP US! TH-THIS CRAZY MAN IS--
ERK
UHM...
THIS PHOTO BOOK HERE COSTS OVER 10,000 YEN.
Left perfect footprints, too
HER POLITE LITTLE TOT KNOCKED IT OFF THE SHELF AND STOMPED ALL OVER IT.
AAH!! MA'AM!
YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY FOR THAT!
WHA?
HUH?
KANAKO!
ALL YOU'RE HERE FOR IS TO HELP ME LOOK!
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA. IT'S SUNDAY, AND I CAN'T FIND MOTO-CHAN ANYWHERE.
I'm nervous like it's my first time...
I NEVER THOUGHT THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN YOU'D ASK ME OUT ON A DATE.
SORRY, DID I KEEP YOU WAITING?

LISTEN HERE, BOY, THAT AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' TA DO WITH THIS!
BESIDES, AH'M BRITISH!
That's America's problem!
Stupid foreigner!
DON'T SELL ME SOME JIVE ABOUT "MANNERS" OR "LITTERING," EITHER, PAL! NOT UNTIL YOU GET THAT IDIOT BOSS OF YOURS SITTING IN HIS BIG WHITE HOUSE TO RE-THINK SNUBBIN' THE KYOTO PROTOCOLS!
WHAT THE HELL BUSINESS IS IT OF YOURS WHERE I TOSS MY CIGARETTE BUTTS?!
SHUT UP, MAN! JUST SHUT YOUR FACE!!
LOSER.
...HUH?
What was that?
UMM...AH JUST SAID AH WAS BRITISH...
Time for a four-man Pearl Harbor!
WOKOH
...IS YOU TRYIN' TO ORDER ME AROUND IN MY OWN COUNTRY, AMERICAN!
MAN, I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE JEWISH OR SLAVIC OR PORTUGUESE!! WHAT GETS MY GOAT...
SHADDAP!!
WAAAAH!!
Y'ALL SHOULD SAY SORRY!
AND LITTERIN' AIN'T THE POINT NONE NEITHER. THAT BUTT WAS STILL LIT, AND IT HIT THIS POOR KID IN THE HEAD!
YA'LL IS JUST MUDDYING THE WATERS WITH THAT NONSENSE!
LEAVE THAT OUT, ALREADY! YEESH!
INTER-NATIONAL CONFLICT?
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
YOUR CRAPPY SOCIETY BACK HOME IS SUCH A MESS, YOU'VE GOT NO RIGHT TO JUDGE OURS!

YOU KNOW...
...YOU'VE GOTTEN A WHOLE LOT CUTER SINCE THEN, TOO.
WHAT?!
なで
なで
WHAT'RE YOU--
IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU DON'T NEED TO COPY YURI.
I KNOW MOTOKO LOVES YOU FOR YOURSELF, JUST THE WAY YOU ARE NOW.
.....

Ah, crap. Got crud on my shoe
EXCELLENT. WORLD PEACE HAS BEEN PRESERVED.
YES! I'M SORRY!!!
Huh?!
Boys suck.
LIKE ANYBODY'S GONNA GO AGAINST THE GUY CARRYING A PORTABLE W.M.D.
Whatever. I'm going home
がば。
READY TO MAKE NICE?

NO MORE CHARITY FOR YOU SCREW-UPS OVER THERE EITHER! IT'S OVER! NO YEN FOR YOU!
HOW MANY TIMES AH GOTTA SAY, THAT'S NOT ENGLAND'S PROBLEM...
WAAAAAAAAAAH
Get 'im, bro! Kill 'im!
I'LL MUDDY YOUR NOSE IF YOU DON'T HAUL ASS BACK TO YOUR OWN COUNTRY!!
STARTING RIGHT THIS VERY SECOND, JAPAN IS NOW A CLOSED-DOOR COMMUNITY!!


CACOPHONY OF SCREAMING AND SHOUTING
...EVER LET YOU COLONIZE US!!
AND WE'LL BE DAMNED IF WE EVER...
"YAMATO-DAMASHI!" OLD-STYLE JAPANESE PATRIOT
GOT TH--
--AOUPH!!
HUH?

SCHOOL CAFETERIA REVOLUTION, PT.2

Continuing from Part 1...

The scariest part of this whole problem is that it's not confined to school food. Kids are getting fed the same junk at home. (Well, not everyone, of course, but I'd say the majority are.) I'm sure some families have good reasons for this, like not being able to afford better, but apparently most of it happens just because the adults don't feel like cooking. Many adults even hate veggies themselves, the fools! (This is why English food sucks so much...!) Growing kids need fresh vegetables and healthy foods rich in proteins and vitamins! (Hey, you need those when you diet, too!)

One lone cook has decided to tackle this problem, taking on all the ignorant parents and negligent school chefs (and actually, if you look at it right, the entire country) single-handedly. Watching the documentary as it detailed his battle, I completely sympathized with him and found myself raging at those stupid chefs, too. (Even his wife gets mad, demanding to know why he has to be the one to take this all on.)

You wouldn't think it, but the documentary was actually pretty exciting, almost like a drama. At the first school he reformed, there was this one lady chef he had a big fight with, but later in the show she becomes one of his fiercest allies. (There are even parts where chefs try to run away when he shows up, too...)

YOU STEPPED UP AND PROTECTED A LITTLE KID WHEN NOBODY ELSE WOULD.
GOOD SHOW. WAY GOOD.
HOW OLD ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
Is he secretly gay?
NO PROB', MAN.
HOW COME IT'S SO EASY FOR HIM TO SEDUCE GUYS?
GOSH... THANK YA KINDLY.
AND WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?! DID YOU COME TO JAPAN ALL BY YOURSELF? WHY ARE YOU HERE?
ONLY 15 AND YOU'RE ALREADY THAT TALL?!
No way!
You okay on your own?
AH'M 15.

THANK Y'ALL KINDLY FOR YOUR HELPING HAND. AH'M RIGHT GLAD YOU HAPPENED ALONG.
MAH NAME IS STUART.
BUT PLEASE, CALL ME PAUL.
"PAUL"?! WHY "PAUL"?!
...OH.
SO, THAT'S WHY HE'S GOT SUCH A THICK ACCENT.
Ah...
Ah've been Paul ever since.
Roger!
From today on, you call yourself "Paul."
HE'S STUART... BUT HE'S PAUL. NOT STUART... PAUL...
Hmmm ..how many of you young readers remember the Japanese actor/comedian Paul-maki and his snapping and heavy accent?
...SO HE GAVE ME THE NICKNAME "PAUL-MAKI."
WELL, Y'SEE, WHEN AH WAS LITTLE, MAH NEIGHBOR AND BEST FRIEND WAS A JAPANESE BOY. HE SAW HOW GOOD AH WAS AT SNAPPIN' MY FINGERS...
"BAD SHOW"? NOT AT ALL, DUDE. NOT AT ALL.
UHM, STUA...ER, I MEAN, PAUL-KUN, HEARING YOU SPEAK WITH THAT ACCENT IS GIVING ME THE CREEPS.
BAD SHOW ON MAH PART.
AH MUST SAY, THE CROWDS HERE ARE STAGGERING. SO MANY FOLK, YOU HAVETA STARE! THAT'S HOW I RAN INTO THOSE TWO ROUGHNECKS.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME AH'VE EVER BEEN TO JAPAN.

Really?
YOUR ARMS AND LEGS ARE WAY LONGER THAN AVER-AGE.
I ACTUALLY NOTICED IT QUITE A WHILE AGO.
YOUR HEIGHT IN AND OF ITSELF IS COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL!
HEY, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT, GIVEN MY HEIGHT, MY ARMS AND LEGS ARE JUST THE RIGHT LENGTH.
IN FACT, YOUR ENTIRE BODY IS TOTALLY OFF FROM STANDARD PROPORTIONS. YOU FAIL AS A JAPANESE PERSON, KAGURAZAKA-SAN, YOU FAIL!
...THAT WOULD BE YOU.
I'M NOT THE ODDBALL HERE, KAGURAZAKA-SAN...
How could you buy jeans if you had no money?
WELL, EXCUSE ME FOR HAVING SURPRISINGLY SHORT LEGS!
I MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT I'M THE AVERAGE HEIGHT FOR JAPANESE GIRLS!
Surprised me.
I'VE BOUGHT ONES THAT WERE TOO SHORT ON ME ONCE OR TWICE.
NEVER HAD TO HEM ANY OF THEM, THOUGH. SPEAKING OF, YOU'VE CUT THOSE PRETTY DAMN SHORT, DON'T YOU THINK?

WHAT A SHOCK!
YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON I'VE EVER SEEN WHO HASN'T NEEDED TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO A NEW PAIR OF JEANS.
...TO FIND THE SISTER MAH PA LEFT HERE AFTER THE WAR.
AH CAME TO JAPAN...

WHAT...?
TCH.
OH!
OH, CRAP!
DIDN'T I STICK MY FOOT IN MY MOUTH LIKE THIS BEFORE? THIS TEMPERATURE DROP IS EERILY FAMILIAR...
Old Memory
"IT'S LIKE SHE GIVES OFF SOME KIND OF PHEROMONE, BECAUSE FOREIGNERS TALK TO HER ALL THE TIME!"
NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WI--
--HM?
...ER, FOREIGN BLOOD IN YOU?
...YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE...YOU KNOW...

SHE HAS MORE DELICATE FACIAL FEATURES, TOO.
...AND HER SKIN IS UNUSUALLY PALE, AND HER HAIR A LIGHTER BROWN.
Plus, she's so athletic.
Strong for being so slim...
Wow, that guy is so pretty.
Who wants to be average?
SHE'S TALL AND HAS LONG, SLENDER LIMBS...
SURE, IT'S HARD TO TELL IF KAGURAZAKA-SAN'S A GUY OR A GIRL...BUT IT'S EVEN WEIRDER THAT SHE DOESN'T REALLY LOOK JAPANESE.
NO MATTER HOW YOU CUT IT, SHE'S JUST... DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF US.
A TOUGH ONE DEVOID OF MANNERS.
Plus, she ogles girls.
LOOK CLOSE, AND IT'S NOT HARD TO SEE KAGURAZAKA-SAN IS REALLY A BEAUTIFUL GUY...ER, I MEAN, GIRL.
HEY, UM, KAGURAZAKA-SAN?
YOU... AH...
ONLY THOSE DARK EYES REFLECT JAPAN.

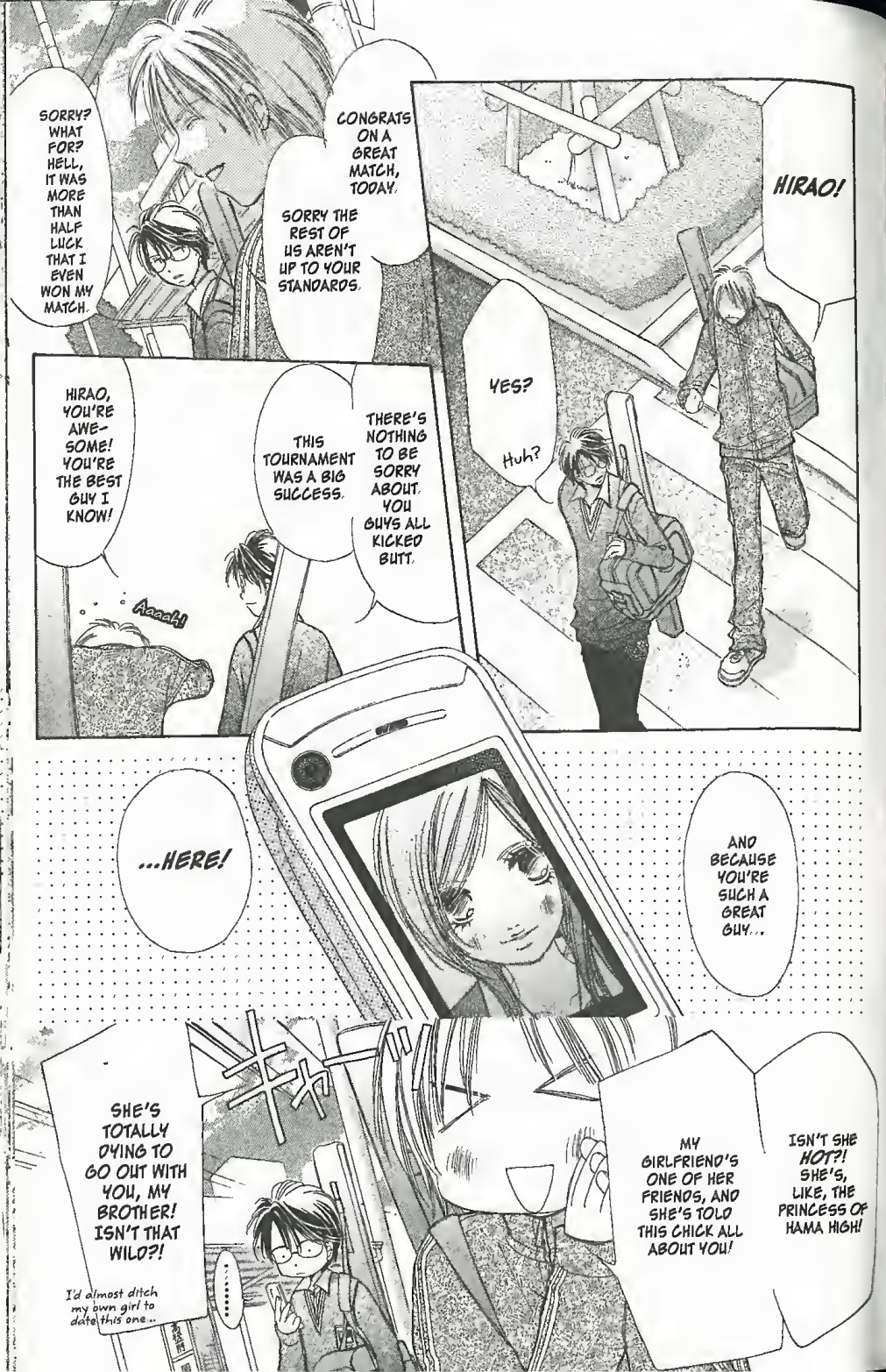
...THAT KAGURAZAKA-SAN IS AVOIDING THE SUBJECT.
I'LL GO, TOO.
NAH, THAT'S OKAY.
BACK IN A SEC.
CRAP! I FORGOT TO GET THEM TO PUNCH MY POINT CARD AT THAT LAST STORE.
OH!
IT'S PAINFULLY OBVIOUS...

...IF BOTH OF HER PARENTS REALLY ARE PURE JAPANESE...
..THEN WHY DOES SHE LOOK THE WAY SHE DOES?
HMMM...
IF WHAT SHE SAID IS TRUE...
OH... UH... OKAY.
THIS WON'T TAKE LONG. YOU JUST WAIT FOR ME HERE.

WHERE COULD SHE HAVE GOTTEN IT FROM?

NOPE, NOT ONE DAMN DROP.
I DID SAY ALL THAT STUFF BEFORE...
"IT'S BECAUSE KAGURAZAKA-SAN IS BUILT MORE LIKE AN AMERICAN GIRL, WITH THOSE HIPS AND THINGS. I BET THEY THINK YOU'RE HALF-CAUCASIAN OR SOMETHING."
THAT'S RIGHT.

BOTH MY MOM AND MY DAD WERE 100% FULL-BLOODED JAPANESE.
YOU'VE EVEN MET MY DUMB OLD GRANDPA, MY DAD'S DAD. HE'S PURE JAPANESE, TOO, RIGHT?
Old geezer
AH HA HA HA.
SHE'S GOT A POINT.
BUT...THEN WHY DID THE AIR AROUND HERE SUDDENLY GO ARCTIC?


SORRY? WHAT FOR? HELL, IT WAS MORE THAN HALF LUCK THAT I EVEN WON MY MATCH.
CONGRATS ON A GREAT MATCH, TODAY.
SORRY THE REST OF US AREN'T UP TO YOUR STANDARDS.
HIRAO!
YES?
Huh?
HIRAO, YOU'RE AWE-SOME! YOU'RE THE BEST GUY I KNOW!
THIS TOURNAMENT WAS A BIG SUCCESS.
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE SORRY ABOUT. YOU GUYS ALL KICKED BUTT.
Aaaah!
...HERE!
AND BECAUSE YOU'RE SUCH A GREAT GUY...
SHE'S TOTALLY DYING TO GO OUT WITH YOU, MY BROTHER! ISN'T THAT WILD?!
MY GIRLFRIEND'S ONE OF HER FRIENDS, AND SHE'S TOLD THIS CHICK ALL ABOUT YOU!
ISN'T SHE HOT?! SHE'S, LIKE, THE PRINCESS OF HAMA HIGH!
I'd almost ditch my own girl to date this one...
.....

NOW, I'M SURE YOU'RE ALL EXHAUSTED. IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY. SO, GO HOME, RELAX, AND REST UP.
OH, AND DON'T WORRY. I'M ONLY SAYING GO HOME FIGURATIVELY. IT'S NOT AN ORDER. I KNOW EVERYBODY'S GOT THEIR OWN WAYS OF RELAXING.
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
GOOD JOB, EVERYONE. YOU ALL DID GREAT TODAY.
ESPECIALLY YOU, SAWAGUCHI. YOU PUT UP A GOOD FIGHT AGAINST MURAI AND ROCKED YODOSHO HIGH'S CONFIDENCE. MURAI'S NO LESS THAN NUMBER 3 IN ALL OF TOKYO.
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN!
DIS-MISSED!
JUST MAKE SURE YOU CAN STILL PRACTICE AT 100% TOMORROW, OKAY?
KEEP PRACTICING AS HARD AS YOU'VE BEEN, AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BEAT HIM NEXT TIME.

AND--
HEY!
HIRAO!
It's gotta be like that?
...OH.
Let... go...!!
No...!
I said, no!!
GIVE MY PURSE BACK, YOU JERK!
Gawd!
C'MON, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
NO MEANS NO! YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN TO STOP RELYING ON OTHER PEOPLE TO SAVE YOUR BUTT ALL THE TIME!
I ONLY NEED A LITTLE! JUST ENOUGH TO BUY A TRAIN TICKET HOME!

SO, WHAT DO YOU SAY, STUD?! DO YOU THINK SHE'S HOT?!
OF COURSE.
AND SHE'S UBER-POPULAR, TOO!
You bet she is!
SHE CERTAINLY IS VERY ATTRACTIVE.
BUT WHY...? THERE'S NO REASON.
Why does she look up from under her eyelashes like that?
All these pictures are taken from the same angle.
WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES A GIRL "HOT," ANYWAY?
A GUY AT YOUR LEVEL SHOULD BE GOING AFTER CLASSY GIRLS LIKE HER, Y'KNOW?
I MEAN, YOU'RE SMART, YOU'RE ATHLETIC...
...YOU'RE SERIOUS, STRAIGHT-FORWARD, AND NICE.
YOU'RE A GREAT LEADER, ALL THE GUYS TOTALLY DIG YOU.
HECK, YOU'RE EVEN ALL HANDSOME AND STUFF!
WITH ALL THAT GOING FOR YOU, MAN, YOU COULD HAVE ANY GIRL YOU WANT! ANY GIRL!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOWER YOURSELF TO CHASING, YOU KNOW, THAT ONE CHICK.
I MEAN, SURE, SHE'S KINDA CUTE, BUT DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY GUYS SHE'S HAD?

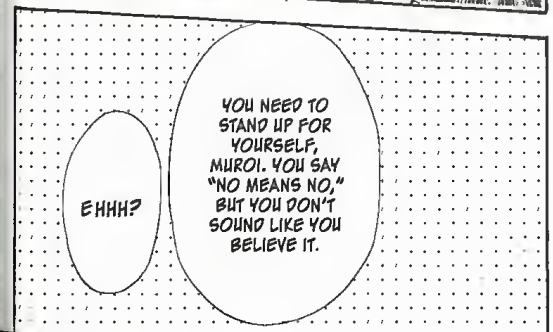
AND JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR...
...HIRAO?
...I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU ANYWHERE NEAR YURI MUROI EVER AGAIN. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
Y-yessir

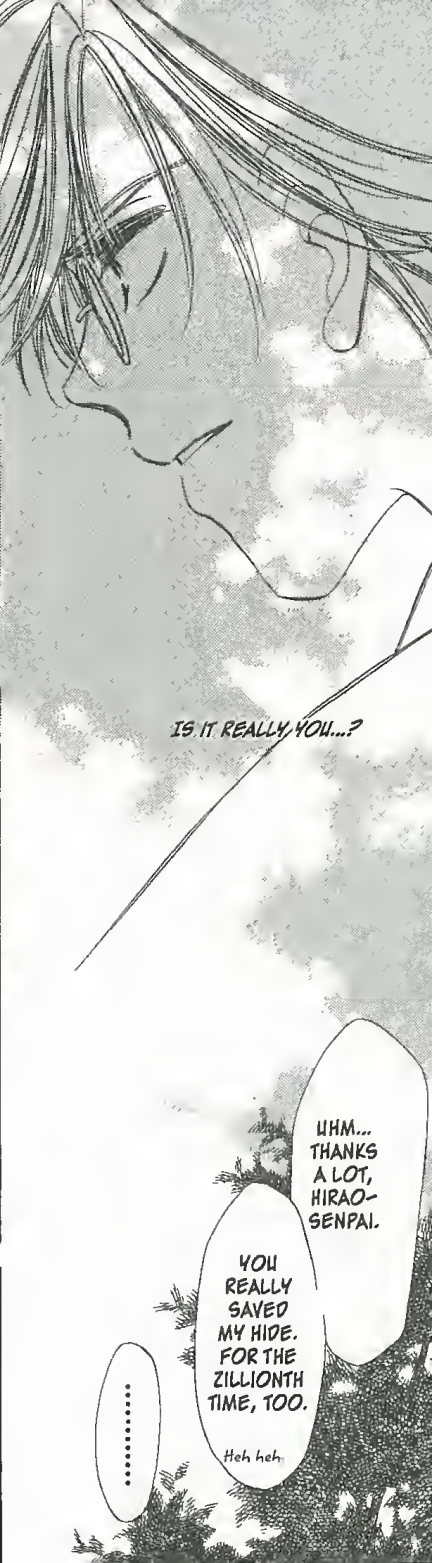
WELL, I'VE CHANGED! I WON'T BE YOUR CRUTCH ANYMORE!
BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYONE ELSE I CAN TURN TO!
YOU'RE THE ONLY GIRL WHO'S NEVER GIVEN UP ON ME, YURI! THE ONLY ONE!
YOU NEED TO TRY CHANGING YOURSELF, BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T, YOU'LL BE STUCK BEING A LOSER FOREVER!
WHA...
...ALL RIGHT.
I GET IT, YURI. IT'S THE LAST TIME. JUST ENOUGH FOR THE TICKET.
PLEASE, YURI.
I'LL DO BETTER FROM NOW ON. I SWEAR.
NO. I SHOULD-N'T DO THIS.
IT'S THE SAME DUMB MISTAKE ALL OVER AGAIN.
IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE MONEY FOR THE TRAIN, THEN START WALKING. LEARN TO LIVE WITH WHAT LIFE HANDS YOU.
I...I NEED TO STOP...!!
Yuri!

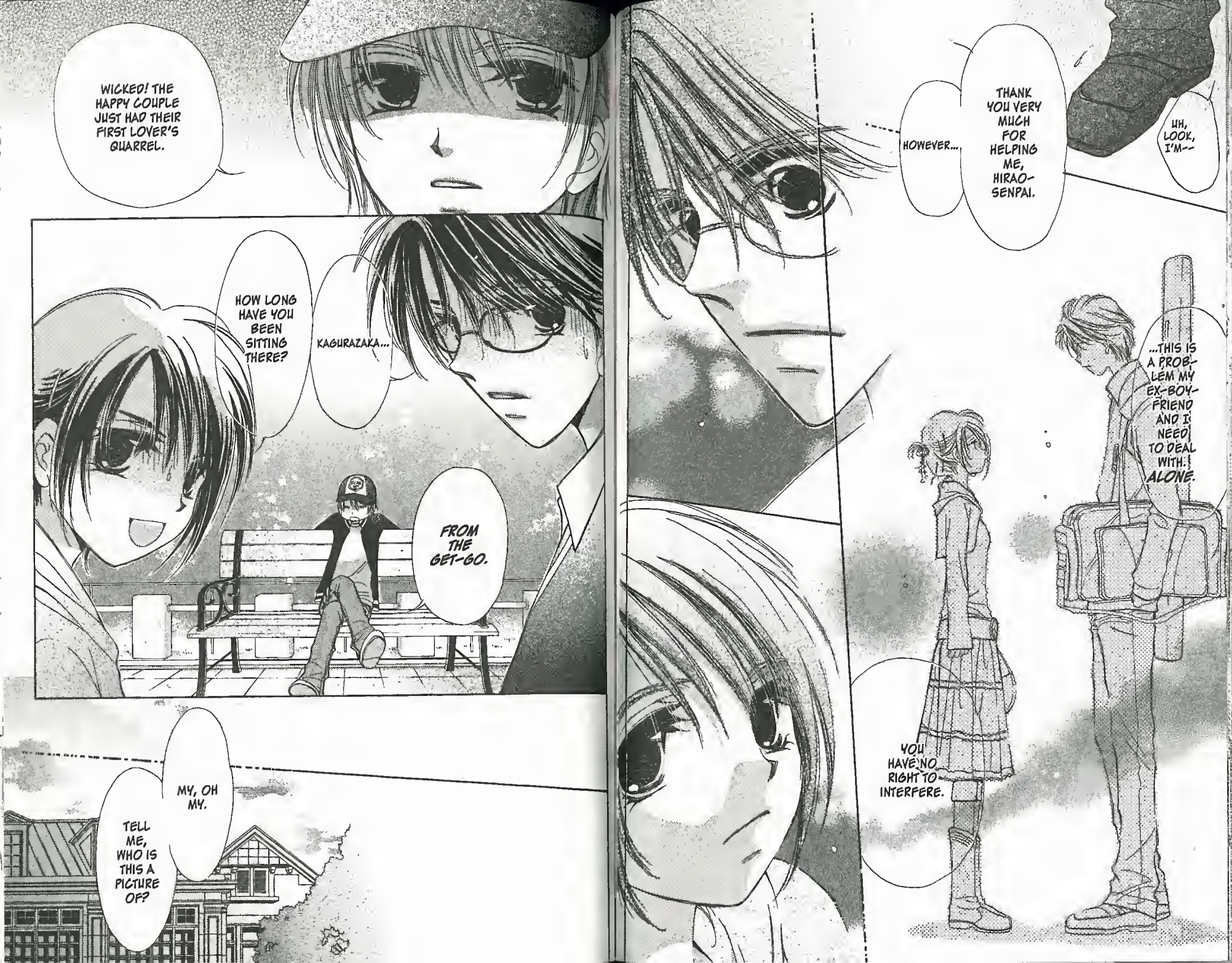
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY HERE, SENPAI?!
WHERE'S HE GET OFF?
WHAT THE HECK--?!
THEY MIGHT LOOK WEAK AND SAD LIKE PITIFUL PUPPIES, BUT GIVING IN TO THEM IS NOT KINDNESS. IT'S STUPIDITY.
HOW LONG WAS HE WATCHING US?
He knows!
YOU HESITATED. YOU CONSIDERED IT.
Kan-chan?
DID YOU SEE ME GIVE KAN-CHAN A SINGLE YEN?
ERRRR...
YOU ENCOURAGE THEM.
...OOPS.
OH, CRAP! I DID IT AGAIN ...!!
?!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOWS WEAKNESS. THEY SEE THAT YOU'RE INDECISIVE, AND THESE SCUMBAGS SWOOP IN LIKE VULTURES. THEY BAT THEIR EYELASHES, AND YOU COMPLETELY CAVE IN.

UHM... HIRAO-SENPAI?
I APPRECIATE IT, I REALLY DO...

HUH?!
W-WHAT...?

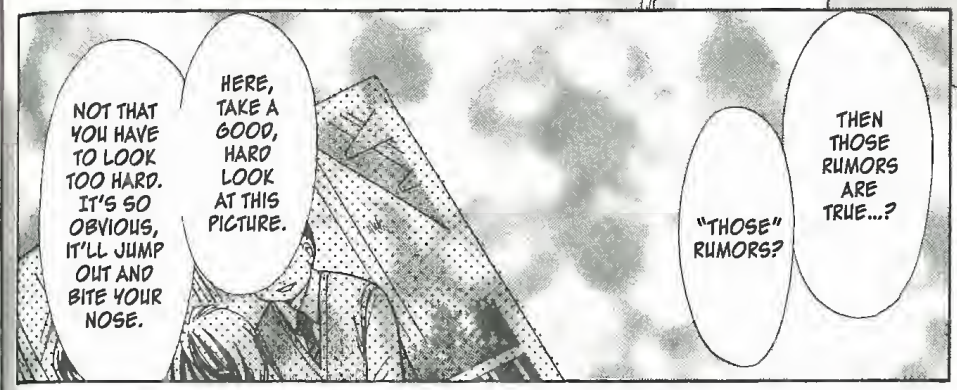

EHHH?
YOU NEED TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF, MUROI. YOU SAY "NO MEANS NO," BUT YOU DON'T SOUND LIKE YOU BELIEVE IT.


IS IT REALLY YOU...?
UHM... THANKS A LOT, HIRAO-SENPAI.
YOU REALLY SAVED MY HIDE. FOR THE ZILLIONTH TIME, TOO.
Heh heh.

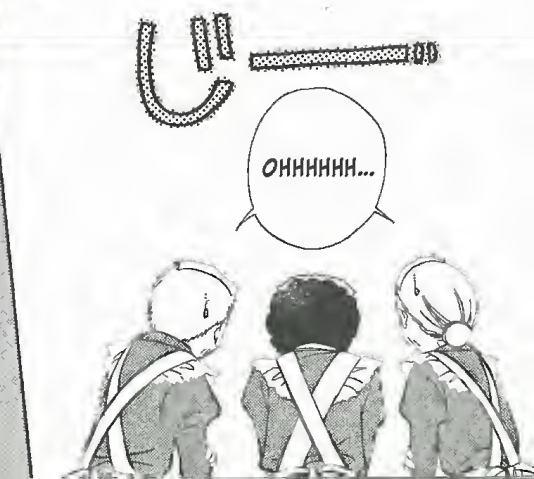

WICKED! THE HAPPY COUPLE JUST HAD THEIR FIRST LOVER'S QUARREL.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SITTING THERE?
KAGURAZAKA...
FROM THE GET-GO.
MY, OH MY.
TELL ME, WHO IS THIS A PICTURE OF?
HOWEVER...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR HELPING ME, HIRAO-SENPAI.
UH, LOOK, I'M--
...THIS IS A PROBLEM MY EX-BOYFRIEND AND I NEED TO DEAL WITH ALONE.
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE.

...JUST WHO ARE MISTRESS MOTOKO'S REAL PARENTS?
One story says she grew on a tree.
Uh...
2ND WARD, HARUNA TOWN...
...2-2, WAKABA APARTMENTS.
AC-CORDING TO THE ADDRESS, THIS SHOULD BE THE PLACE.
AIN'T MUCH TO BE DONE ABOUT IT, THEN, AH RECKON. THE TRAIL'S BEEN COLD FOR A DECADE.
.....

MASTER WAS TRYING TO THROW IT AWAY.
BUT WHY?!
Gracious!
THAT'S A PHOTO OF THE YOUNG MASTER FUMIO AND HIS WIFE MASAKO-SAMA. WHY WOULD THE BOSS WANT TO--?
PRECISELY BECAUSE IT'S A PICTURE OF THE YOUNG MASTER AND HIS WIFE. THESE ARE MISTRESS MOTOKO'S PARENTS.
DON'T YOU KNOW? MASTER ALWAYS DOUBTED MASAKO-SAMA'S FIDELITY.


THEN THOSE RUMORS ARE TRUE...?
"THOSE" RUMORS?
HERE, TAKE A GOOD, HARD LOOK AT THIS PICTURE.
NOT THAT YOU HAVE TO LOOK TOO HARD. IT'S SO OBVIOUS, IT'LL JUMP OUT AND BITE YOUR NOSE.

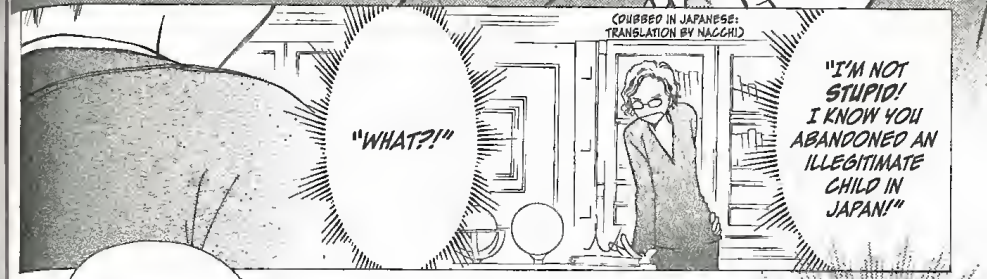
THEN...


OHHHHHH...

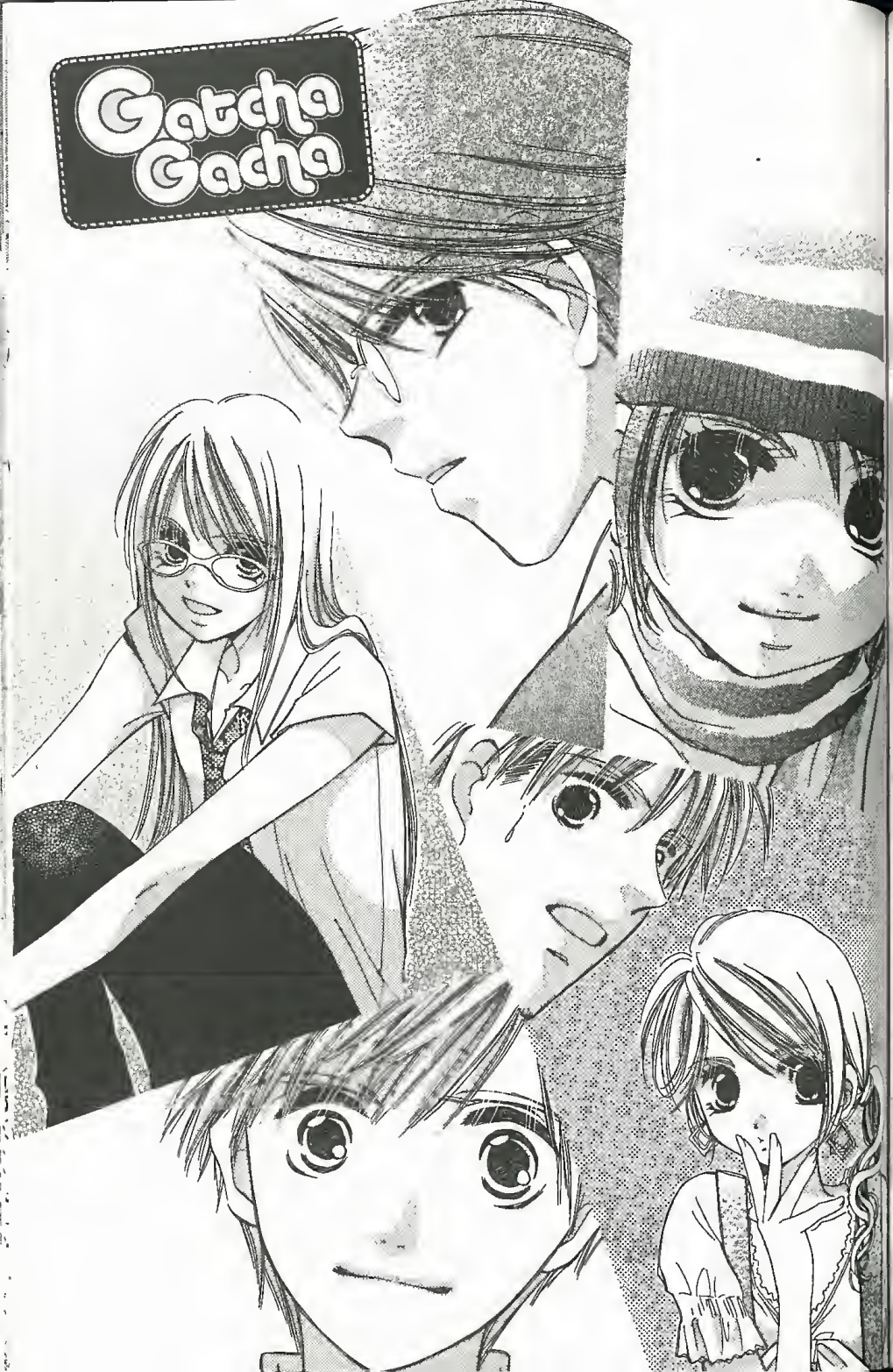
THAT'S STILL TOO FLIMSY A CONNECTION TO WARRANT A TRIP AROU--
.....
THAT THERE LITTLE GAL DOESN'T LOOK VERY JAPANESE, NOW DOES SHE?
What is it about mutter
mutter
mutter
AH'D SAY IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT SHE AIN'T THE DAUGHTER OF BOTH THOSE PARENTS, AT LEAST.

SHE'S LEANING MORE TOWARD MAH SIDE OF THE FENCE, IF YOU GET MAH DRIFT.
BESIDES, AH DID SOME MATH, AND THE GAL'S THE RIGHT AGE TO COINCIDE WITH PA'S VISIT.
AND... OH, WAIT. AH THINK I'VE DONE TALKED YOUR EARS OFF, HAVEN'T I?
Y'ALL ARE JUST PLUM NICE. AH GOT COMPLETELY CARRIED AWAY, DRAGGIN' YOU TWO ALL THE WAY OUT HERE WITH ME.
AH'M VERY SORRY. AH TRULY AM. AH'LL MANAGE THE REST ON MAH OWN NOW, THANK Y'KINDLY--
AH-HA! THAT'S WHAT IT WAS!!

HECK, AH DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I HAD MAHSELF A BIG SISTER UNTIL RECENTLY. MA AND PA WERE FEUDING TO BEAT THE BAND, AND MA LET SLIP ABOUT HER.
"DO YOU REALLY THINK I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING?!"


(DUBBED IN JAPANESE: TRANSLATION BY NACCHI)
"I'M NOT STUPID! I KNOW YOU ABANDONED AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD IN JAPAN!"
"WHAT?!"

"AND HERE'S THE PROOF!"
THE ONLY HINTS AH HAVE ABOUT MAH BIG SISTER ARE THE DIARY PA WROTE WHEN HE WAS VISITIN' Y'ALL AND ONE LONELY SNAPSHOT.
NOW, PA'S HANDWRITING IS THE WORST CHICKEN-SCRATCH YOU'LL EVER SEE, SO THERE'S ALMOST NO DECODING THE DIARY...
...like this place...
Masako-san
...BUT AH DID MANAGE TO PICK OUT SOME BITS ABOUT WHERE HE STAYED AND THE GAL HE WAS SEEIN'.
Plus, his Japanese sucked eggs
SHE INCLUDED THAT SNAPSHOT AH MENTIONED.
WELL, THAT JAPANESE GIRL SENT M' PA A LETTER.
THEN WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE YOU REALLY HAVE A SISTER?
'COURSE, HE WAS CAREFUL NOT TO SPILL THE BEANS ON HIS LOVECHILD.
HARUNA TOWN...
WAKABA


Gatcha Gacha

TAKA-HIRO, I REMEM-BER NOW!
HARUNA TOWN'S WAKABA APARTMENTS IS WHERE MOTO-CHAN AND HER PARENTS USED TO LIVE!
COME AGAIN?
HERE.
TAKE A LOOK AT THE "BITE ME" EXPRESSION ON THAT LITTLE BRAT'S FACE.
REMIND YOU OF ANYONE?
HMPH
HA HA HA HA HA!
I'm sure she hates your guts now.
THAT
NEXT CHAPTER: "AH'M LOOKING FOR A SISTER, NOT A BROTHER!" (J/K)
HA HA HA
PAT
PAT

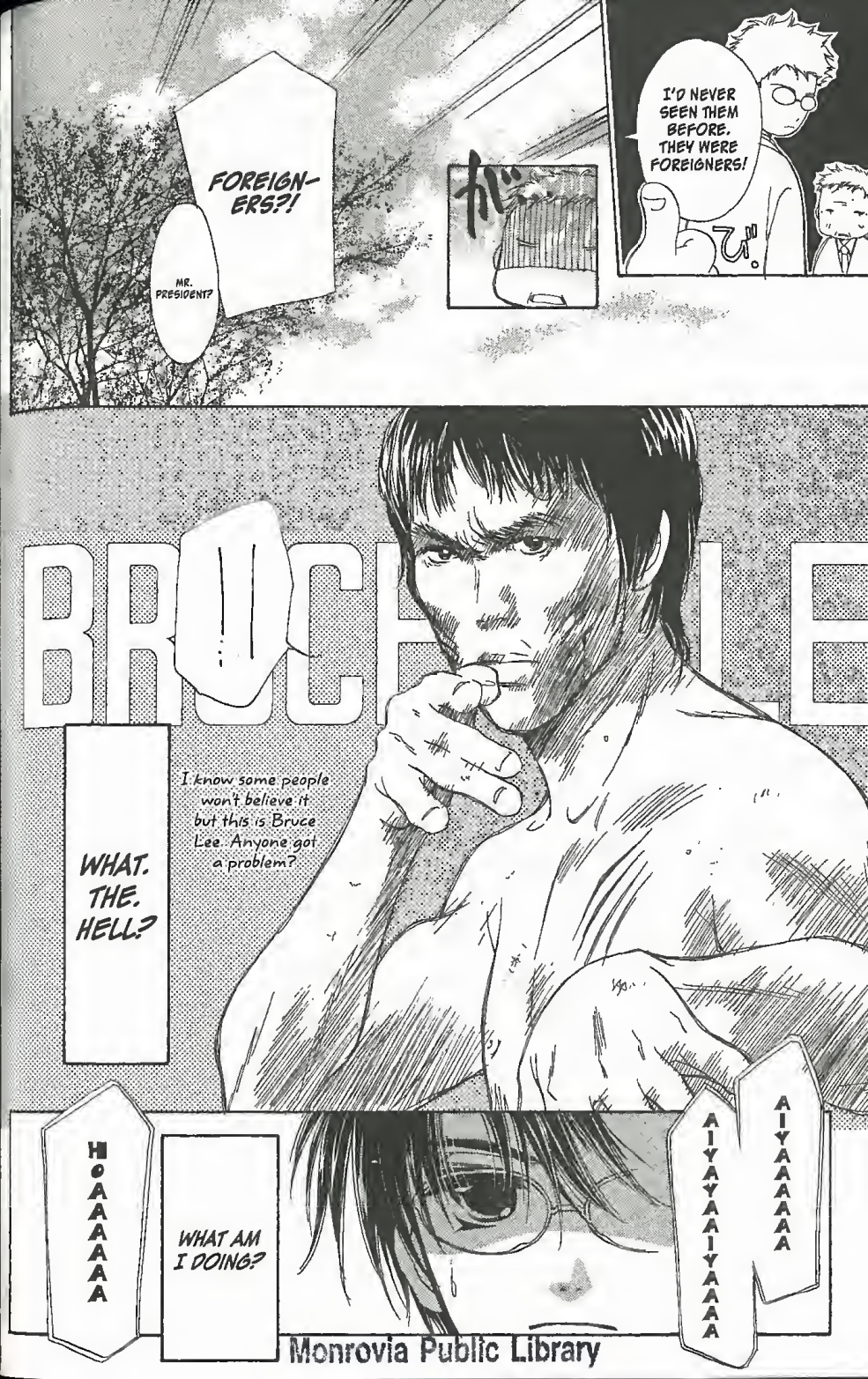
MR. PRESIDENT.
I'M AFRAID IT'S TIME.
DID MOTOKO ...?
NO, NOT HER.
These flowers aren't her style.
YOU WERE AN IDIOT TO THE END, MY SON.
I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD CEASE CALLING ME BY THAT RIDICULOUS NICKNAME.
I AM AWARE OF THAT, SIR. ALSO, MY NAME IS TADASHI MOGIYA.
ALREADY? BUT WE JUST ARRIVED, MOJA!
THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT THEM LEFT ONLY MO-MENTS AGO.
Actually, I've taken over for my Father.
AH, THE HEAD PRIEST.
Er... his son anyway
WHO CARES? WHAT ABOUT THESE FLOWERS--
OH! THOSE?
SIR, YOU ARE SCHEDULED FOR A COMPANY DINNER WITH KONDOS OF TOUKI MOTORS.
SOURPUSS MOJA! UGLY SPOIL-SPORT!!
BOO

Recommended DVD

Hotel Rwanda

For many long years, Rwanda suffered through a sporadic war between the Hutu and the Tutsi tribes, and at one horrible turning point, the fighting turned into genocide. Over 100 days, almost 1 million innocent citizens were murdered. Though Rwanda was abandoned by the rest of the world, one native, Paul Rusesabagina, managed to save over 1200 lives by letting them hide in his hotel. The Rwandan genocide really did happen in 1994. Unfortunately, I bet a lot of us don't even remember it. Maybe more people don't know about it than do. That's a terrible thing to consider. (They weren't killed with guns, either. Most were hacked to death with machetes.)

DIE FIGHTING, OR DON'T BOTHER!
AND WHEN YOU GO DOWN, YOU DO IT FACE FIRST AND TAKING PILES OF YOUR ENEMY DOWN WITH YOU! GOT THAT?!
Miss Motoko's MANLINESS TRAINING
THAT INNER BRUCE LEE WAKES ONLY WHEN YOUR TRUE MALE INSTINCTS COME ALIVE.
THIS SOMETIMES HAPPENS WHILE PROTECTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY HUNDREDS--NO, THOUSANDS--OF THE ENEMY YOU FACE.
YOU MAKE THE WORLD YOURS, USING ONLY YOUR FISTS!
GRUNGH
GRUNGH GRUNGH
LISTEN UP.
I DON'T CARE WHO THEY ARE, ALL MEN HAVE A BRUCE LEE SLEEPING SOMEWHERE IN THEIR SOUL.
WHY AM I EVEN HERE?
ACHAAAA
AIYAAAA
AIYA AIYA AIYAAA
ALTERNATES
Antonio Inoki
Jet Li
The Rock



Monrovia Public Library

YURI!
QUIT EATING ALL THE CRACKERS!
WHY IS IT THIS WAY?
I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF MY WAY COOL INSPIRATIONAL SPEECH!
ばばば

KANAKO-SAN DID THAT TO YOU?!
I'm fine. It won't kill me.
WHAT, THIS? NAH, SOMEBODY ELSE DID THAT.
BUT NEVER MIND...
YOU KNOW. HIM.
THE KID WHO MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE MOTOKO'S YOUNGER BROTHER.
KANAKO GRABBED HIM AND TOOK OFF TO GOD KNOWS WHERE.
...KANAKO PULLED A FAST one ON ME.
SHE KIDNAPPED HIM.
"HIM"? HIM WHO?

.....
WAIT A MINUTE?
HE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE SO NASTY WHEN HE--
BUT IT IS HIS FAULT!
WHAAAA?
SINCE WHEN HAVE I BEEN SO SHORT-TEMPERED...?
WHERE'S MOTOKO?!
Huh?
SHE GOT ME...!!
WHAT?!
SHE GOT ME... KANAKO...
YA... YABE-SENPAI...?

IF I DON'T COME UP WITH SOMETHING...
...MOTO-CHAN COULD VERY WELL GET TAKEN AWAY FROM ME! SHANGHAIED ALL THE WAY TO ENGLAND!
IF WHAT HE'S SAYING IS TRUE...
...IF MOTO-CHAN'S FATHER REALLY ISN'T THE SAME PERSON AS MY FATHER...IF SHE REALLY ISN'T KAGURAZAKA BLOOD...
Is it mah imagination, or has she transformed?
...THEN YOU KNOW THAT OLD COOT GRANDFATHER WON'T LIFT A FINGER TO STOP HER LEAVING!
TAKA-HIRO, I REMEM-BER NOW!
HARUNA TOWN'S WAKABA APARTMENTS IS WHERE MOTO-CHAN AND HER PARENTS USED TO LIVE!
TAKE A LOOK AT THE "BITE ME" EXPRESSION ON THAT LITTLE BRAT'S FACE.
REMIND YOU OF ANYONE?

ER...
WHY ARE WE--?
YOU WANT TO MEET MOTO-CHAN, RIGHT?!
DAMMIT! I SCREWED UP!
I WANTED TO SHOVE HIM ONTO A CARGO BOAT AND SHIP HIM BACK TO HIS OWN DUMB COUNTRY...
...SO I DRAGGED THAT BRAT ALL THE WAY OUT HERE, BUT THAT'S AS FAR AS I THOUGHT ABOUT IT!
Y-YES, MISS...
FEAR
No way! This isn't some American cartoon!
Strip him, dump his stuff in the bay, and report him to immi-gration?
NOW WHAT DO I DO...?
GOTTA THINK...

MUSCLE DIET

Recently, I made a huge discovery. I learned that... putting on muscle helps you lose weight!! I know it's kinda stupid for me to be bringing up this old idea, but still, I can't help but think that this is the best kind of diet ever, ladies.

Yes, you're still going to need to watch what you eat--you know, cutting back on processed sugars and carbohydrates, making sure to get enough fresh veggies and all that. (Though, also be sure to get enough of the basics: meat, fish, beans, shellfish, eggs, dairy, and fruits.) Eating a balanced menu is good for your skin, too. And adding muscle will increase your metabolism!

10 to 20 minutes of thorough exercise a day is enough to start building muscle. I've been doing it, and I'm starting to see the outline of a six-pack!

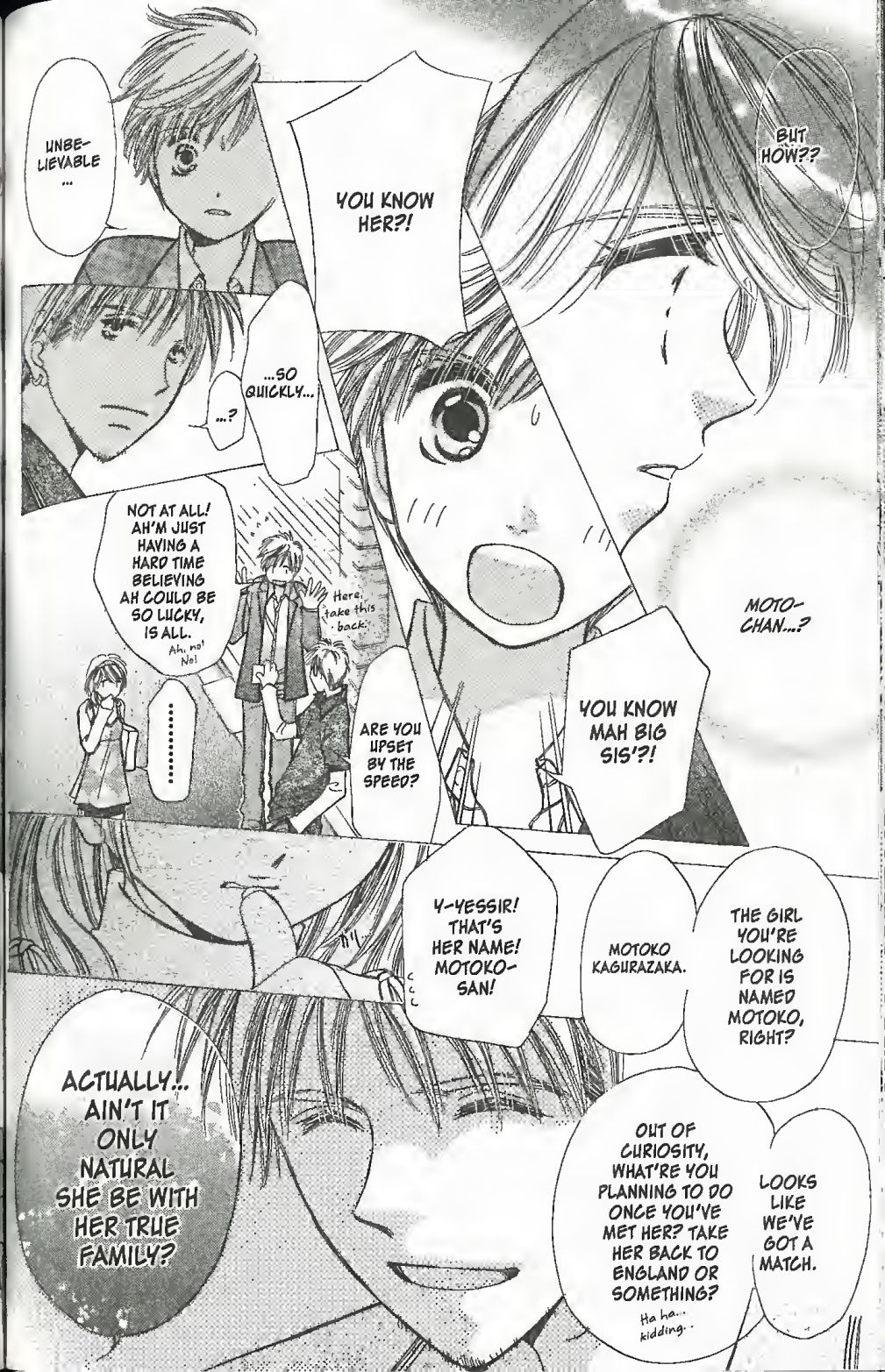
So, that's the perfect diet, ladies! Eat right, exercise, and have a good hearty laugh at least once a day!

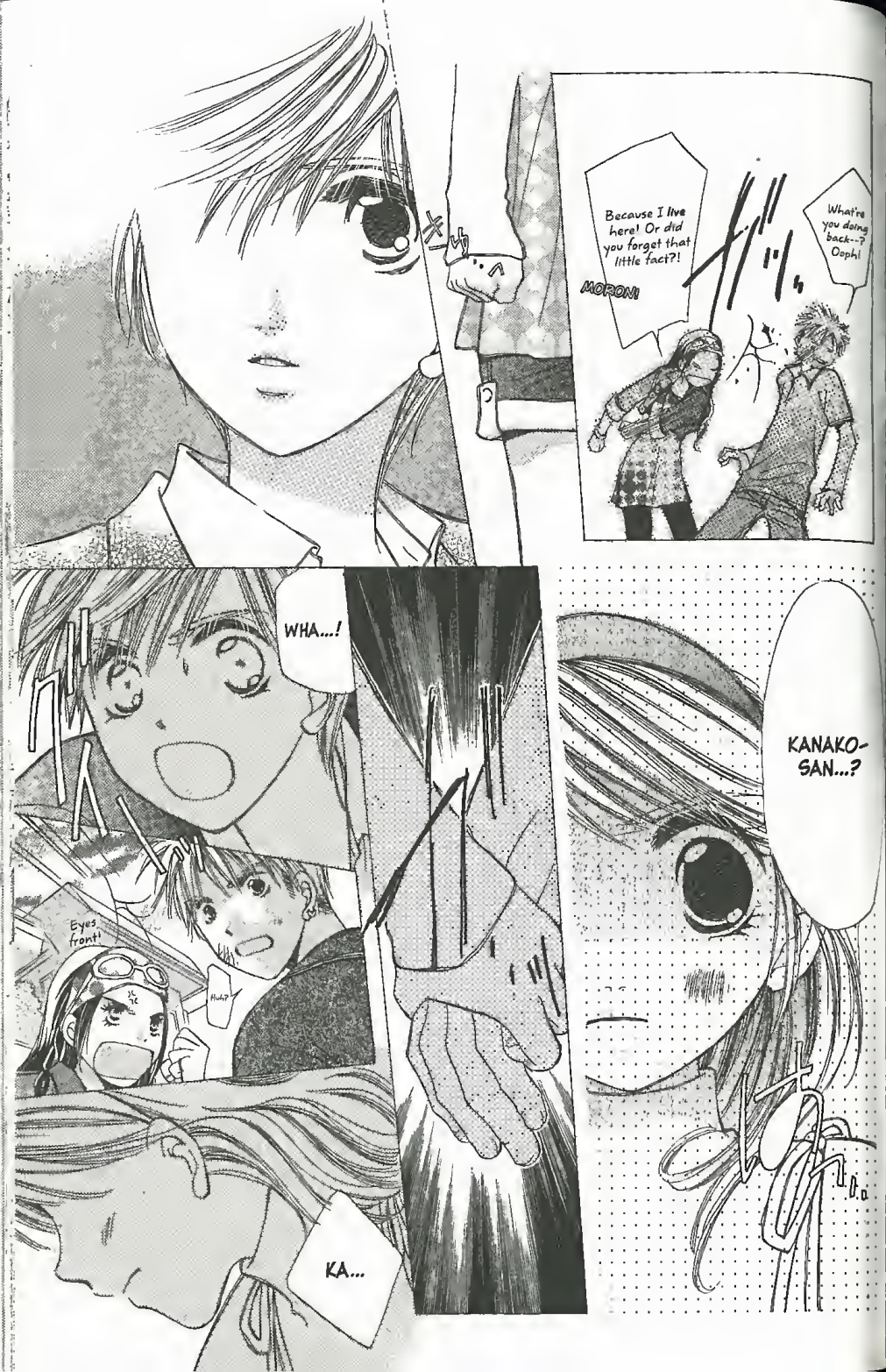
Unfortunately, there isn't a food that'll make you lose weight by eating it. Drat.

Though don't bulk up too much!

Uh-oh...at this rate, I could get too bulky!

By the way, my current favorite reading is Chizu-sensei's *Beautiful Skin.*

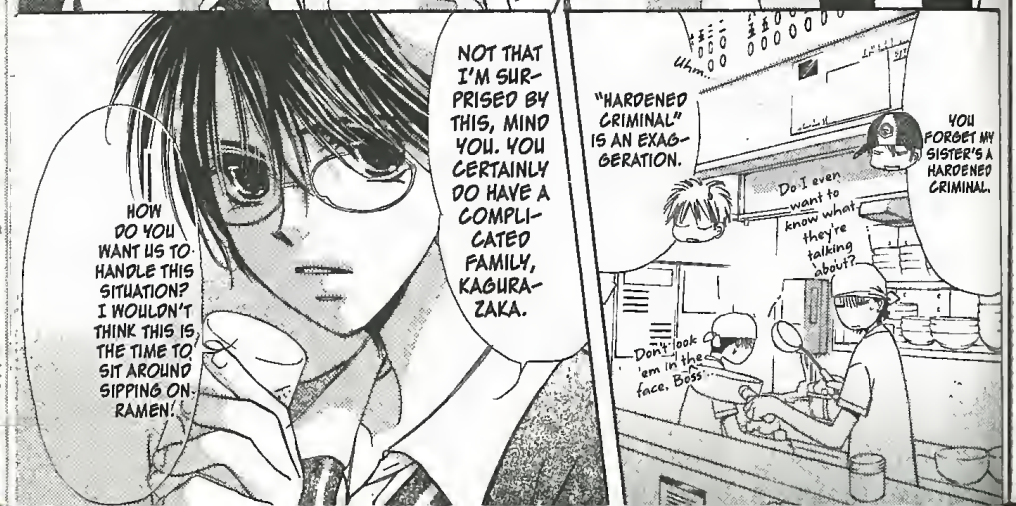

UNBE-LIEVABLE ...
YOU KNOW HER?!
BUT HOW??
...SO QUICKLY...
...?
NOT AT ALL! AH'M JUST HAVING A HARD TIME BELIEVING AH COULD BE SO LUCKY, IS ALL.
Ah, no! No!
Here, take this back.
.....
ARE YOU UPSET BY THE SPEED?
MOTO-CHAN...?
YOU KNOW MAH BIG SIS'?!
Y-YESSIR! THAT'S HER NAME! MOTOKO-SAN!
MOTOKO KAGURAZAKA.
THE GIRL YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS NAMED MOTOKO, RIGHT?
ACTUALLY... AIN'T IT ONLY NATURAL SHE BE WITH HER TRUE FAMILY?
OUT OF CURIOSITY, WHAT'RE YOU PLANNING TO DO ONCE YOU'VE MET HER? TAKE HER BACK TO ENGLAND OR SOMETHING?
Ha ha... kidding.
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT A MATCH.


Because I live here! Or did you forget that little fact?!
MORON!
What're you doing back--? Ooph!
WHA...!
Eyes front!
Huh?
KA...
KANAKO-SAN...?

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH
I KNOW WHERE MOTO-CHAN IS...
I'LL EVEN TAKE YOU TO HER.
.....
Really?
YOU WILL?!
TAKAHIRO!!
Okay...
WHAT ARE YOU PLOTTING NOW KANA--
?
DON'T EVER GO ANYWHERE ALONE WITH HER!
HOLD IT, PAUL! DON'T DO IT!
ER... KANAKO-SAN?
YABE-SAN LOOKS LIKE HE COULD USE SOME HELP...
M-mika-san! When did you get back from Kyushu?
Yesterday!
MEEP!!
I KNEW THERE WAS A REASON I HADN'T HEARD FROM YOU FOR SO LONG!
YOU CHEATING ON ME AGAIN?!
LONG-DISTANCE GIRLFRIEND HE FORGOT HE HAD...

...WOULDN'T IT BE WISEST TO PUT HIM UNDER POLICE PROTECTION?
WELL, BE THAT AS IT MAY...
SHE'S INSANE, SENPAI. JUST IGNORE HER.
WHAT THE HELL?
Bruce Lee?

YOU BET SHE WOULD!
SHE WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR.
HECK, I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF SHE STRIPPED PAUL OF ALL HIS STUFF, TURNED HIM OVER TO IMMIGRATION, AND HAD HIM FORCIBLY DEPORTED.
THERE IS NO OVERREACTING ABOUT KANAKO.
THE POLICE? DUDE, OVERREACT MUCH?


HOW DO YOU WANT US TO HANDLE THIS SITUATION? I WOULDN'T THINK THIS IS THE TIME TO SIT AROUND SIPPING ON RAMEN.
NOT THAT I'M SURPRISED BY THIS, MIND YOU. YOU CERTAINLY DO HAVE A COMPLICATED FAMILY, KAGURAZAKA.
Uhm...
"HARDENED CRIMINAL" IS AN EXAGGERATION.
YOU FORGET MY SISTER'S A HARDENED CRIMINAL.
Do I even want to know what they're talking about?
Don't look 'em in the face, Boss.

...KANAKO!!
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING HIM?!

RAMEN SEIZABUROH
...THEN YOU DON'T EVEN BOTHER TRYING TO FIND THIS KID, SLINKING BACK HERE EMPTY-HANDED INSTEAD.
SO...
...FIRST YOU LET THE SON OF PAUL-MAKI GET KIDNAPPED RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE...
He's not Paul-maki's son!!
PATHETIC. SIMPLY PATHETIC. YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY THE NAME OF THE GREAT MAN, BRUCE LEE.
ON TOP OF IT, YOU LET YOURSELF GET BEATEN TO A PULP BY ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR EXES.

SHE'S NOT THE PERSON SHE USED TO BE.
I DOUBT SHE'LL DO ANY OF THE REALLY WHACKED-OUT STUFF THE OLD HER WOULD'VE DONE.
...I SAY WE GO BACK TO THE HOUSE AND WAIT.
HUH?
...IF KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN REALLY ISN'T...
...IS WHAT WILL YOU DO ONCE WE FIND THEM?
THE REAL QUES-TION...
IF WHAT THAT PAUL PERSON SAYS IS TRUE...
TRUE... SHE'S DEFINITELY GOTTEN MORE TAME.
WHATEVER WE DO, THE SOONER WE START, THE BETTER.
HE'S RIGHT, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
Hunt 'em down.
BUT WHAT CAN WE DO? IT'S YOUR CALL. YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF WHERE KANAKO MIGHT TAKE HIM THAN THE REST OF US DO.
GOOD POINT.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT...
OH.
AWKWARD
WH...
WHY AM I...?
SORRY.
...I DON'T HAVE A CLUE, EITHER.
She's not a criminal.
Not criminal-minded.
...THAT'S OKAY.
UM...
?
Am I missing something?
Let 'em be.
WELL, ANYWAY, FOR THE MOMENT...

EVERYBODY'S SAYING IT. YOU'RE JUST SOME WHITE KID WHO GOT ADOPTED!
...YOUR MOMMA'S FAMILY HAD SOME FOREIGN DUDE STAYING AT THEIR PLACE.
THEY SAY THAT BEFORE YOU WERE BORN...
Dorks.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ISN'T JAPA-NESE.
HUH?
THEY SAY THAT GUY IS REALLY YOUR DADDY!

YOU MEAN WHAT IF I REALLY AM A LOYAL SUBJECT OF GREAT BRITAIN?
IF WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE, THEN MY REASONS FOR STAYING WITH THE KAGURAZAKAS, FOR STAYING IN JAPAN, WILL ALL DISAPPEAR.
IT'D BE KIND OF WEIRD TO HANG AROUND THE HUGE HOUSE OF SOMEONE WHO ISN'T FAMILY, DON'CHA THINK?
"HEY...YOU AREN'T JAPANESE, ARE YOU?"

MOTO-CHAN! GOOD-NESS ME, WHAT A CHILD!
EVERY-BODY'S GOT DIFFERENT PERSONAL CIRCUM-STANCES. NO JUDGING.
WHAT ON EARTH DID THEY SAY THAT MADE YOU SO MAD?
HA HA HA HA. WELL, YOU DID OVERDO IT JUST A LITTLE BIT THIS TIME, MOTOKO-SAN.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO HIT ME!
That hurt!
EVERYONE'S PERSONAL CIRCUM-STANCES ARE DIFFERENT. YOU SHOULDN'T JUDGE.
I SWEAR, I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU GET IT FROM.
So crass for a young lady!
WHA ?!
UH...OF COURSE.
BEFORE MOM AND DAD MARRIED EACH OTHER...
MOM, DO YOU HAVE... YOU KNOW...
...THEY'D BOTH ALREADY BEEN DIVORCED.
...CIRCUM-STANCES"? ONES YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT?

WE'RE SO VERY SORRY.
Waaaaah!
...ARE ONLY EVER RAISED IN THE FATSO KINGDOM OF STOO-PEED!!
BECAUSE EVERYONE KNOWS THAT OVERSIZED LARDBALLS LIKE YOU...
C'MON, LET'S HEAR THAT OINK OF YOURS, PIGBOY!
I was giving them exer-cise!
THESE LITTLE PORKERS ARE GONNA HAVE HEART ATTACKS IN THEIR TWENTIES!
GIMME A BREAK. LIKE THOSE PARENTS WANT THEIR KIDS HAVING LONG LIVES!
SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE WHAT SHE DID.
MOTO-CHAN! THAT'S ENOUGH!

...THAT'S A DREAM THAT CAN'T EVER COME TRUE NOW.
BUT...
IT WOULD BE GREAT IF WE COULD ALL LIVE TOGETHER...
...BEFORE MOTOKO-SAN GETS TALLER THAN ME.
ONE FAMILY. TOGETHER.
IT WAS A DRUNK DRIVER. THEY GOT CAUGHT IN THE PILE-UP.
IT WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM THEIR HOUSE.
IT'S SIMPLY GHASTLY.
WHAT ABOUT THAT CHILD OF THEIRS?
THAT SOUNDS NICE.

WELL, BE THAT AS IT MAY...
...WE SHOULD GO VISIT KANAKO-CHAN AGAIN SOMETIME SOON.
WE CAN TRY REASONING WITH YOUR FATHER ONE MORE TIME. IF WE ASK NICELY ENOUGH, IF WE TRY HARD ENOUGH, THEN MAYBE THIS TIME HE'LL RELENT...
I'M ONLY HUMAN, AFTER ALL.
EVERY-BODY HAS ONE OR TWO THINGS THEY DON'T WANT TO TELL ANYONE ELSE.
BESIDES, HAVING SECRETS IS EXCITING, DON'T YOU THINK?
SHE WAS SO GLIB THE WAY SHE JUST ADMITTED IT.
...BUT, I HAVE TO ADMIT, I PROBABLY HAVE WAY MORE THAN I SHOULD.
EVEN SO, SHE NEVER ACTUALLY SAID WHAT THEY WERE.
I BET I CAN GET EVEN MORE OVERTIME IF I ASK.
THAT'S A FINE IDEA. I'VE MANAGED TO TUCK AWAY A GOOD BIT MORE IN THE MEANTIME, TOO.
AH HA HA HA HA HA HA.
ONE OR TWO IS NICE...
Previously divorced

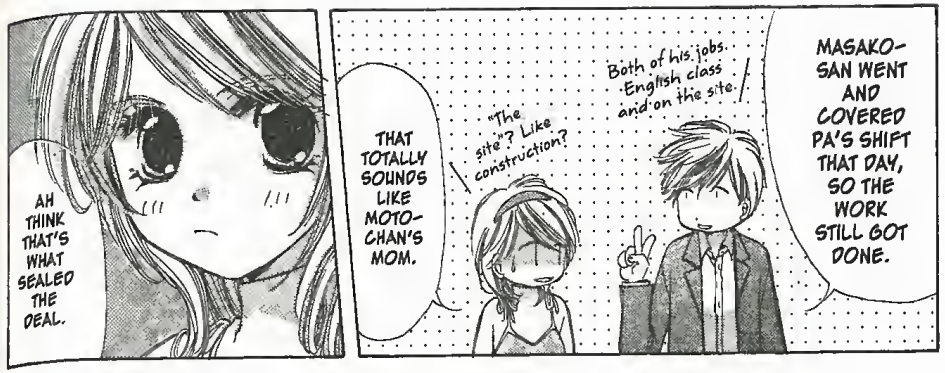
JUST A DREAM...
UH, MASTER? DO YOU MIND NAPPING JUST A BIT LONGER?
MAYBE YOU SHOULD HEAD BACK TO YOUR OWN ROOM FOR SOME SHUT-EYE.
OH.
HE LEFT JUST LIKE YOU TOLD HIM TO, SIR.
WHERE'S MOJA?
WHY WOULD IT BE NOW? THAT WAS AGES AGO...
Drat. He's completely awake.
HAS THE TIME FINALLY COME...?
MOTO-CHAN'S DEAD.
"FOREIGNERS!"

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO HER?
WHAT DO YOU WANT...
...OLD MAN?

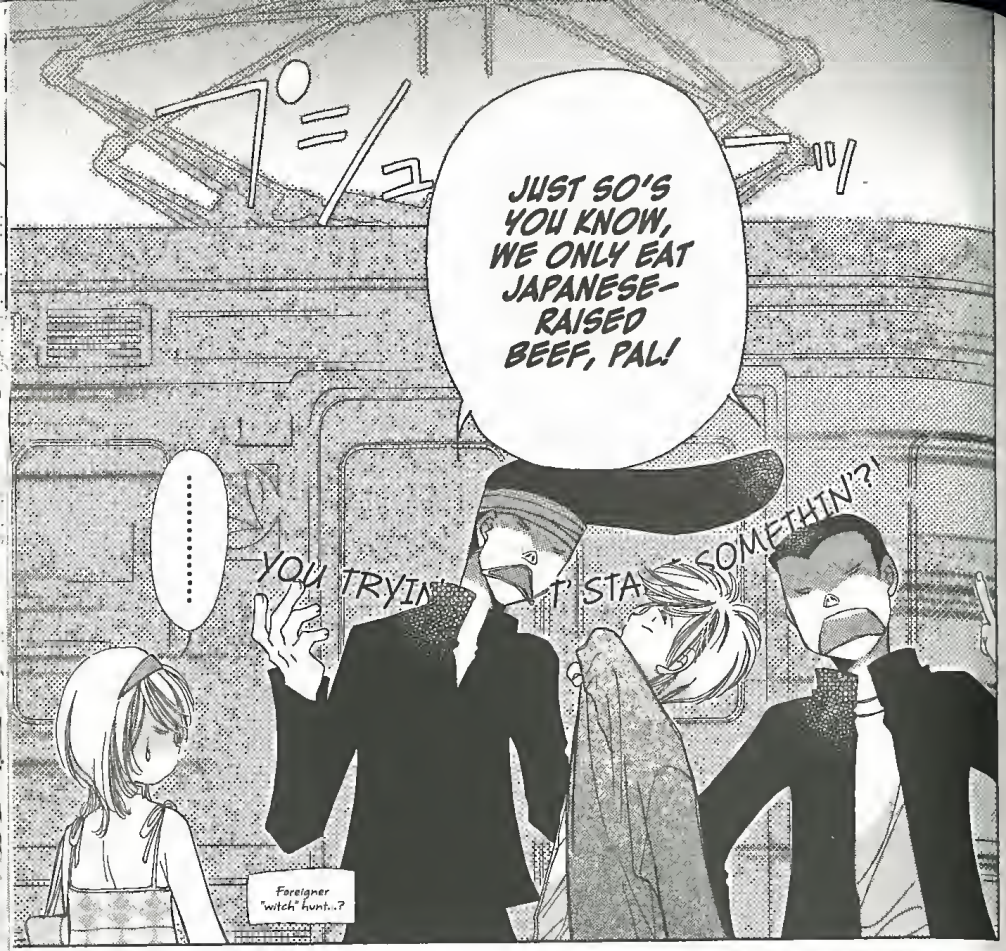
IS THAT SO? GOLLY, JAPANESE WOMEN SURE ARE TOUGH.
HE'LL BE FINE. HE'S USED TO GETTING BEATEN TO A PULP BY WOMEN.
HUH? OH, THAT GUY?
WHAT?
NOW, AH JUST HOPE YABE-SAN HAS SOME-ONE KEEPIN' HIM SAFE.
AH SAW IT ONCE WRITTEN IN HIS DIARY.
ER...AH MEAN, MOTOKO-SAN'S MAMA.
AH RECKON THAT'S WHAT PA SAW IN HIS FILLY THAT MADE HIM LOVE HER SO MUCH.
MASAKO-SAN SMILED ALL THE TIME.
...AND SHE CLOBBERED HIM, SMACKED HIM RIGHT ON THE HEAD, AND MADE HIM STAY IN BED UNTIL HE GOT BETTER.
SEEMS PA WAS FIXIN' TO GO TO WORK EVEN THOUGH HE HAD A BAD FEVER...
Want more potatoes?
BUT I'M-- GAK!!
YOU MUST REST NOW! NO WORKING!
EVERY-THING WILL BE FINE. DON'T YOU WORRY NONE.
Smiling kindly even in violence.
IT DIDN'T MATTER WHEN OR WHERE, SHE WAS ALWAYS SMILING.

SHE WAS RIDING A MOTORCYCLE AND SPUN OUT ON A CURVE. SHE FELL INTO THE OCEAN AND DROWNED. SHE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A LICENSE.
THERE'S NO ONE FOR YOU TO FIND HERE. JUST GIVE IT UP AND GO HOME TO YOUR OWN STUPID COUNTRY, OKAY?
I'M LOSING MY TOUCH. THAT LIE WAS LAME!
THIS FORKED TONGUE OF MINE HAS LOST ITS SHARPNESS.
Y'ALL MUST REALLY LOVE MOTOKO-SAN TO GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO PROTECT HER.
OH, IS THAT SO?

AND MOTOKO-SAN IS THE PRODUCT OF THAT TRUE LOVE.
AH DON'T THINK IT'S SO CRAZY TO THINK PA WOULD LOVE NOTHING MORE THAN FOR US TO BE TOGETHER.
SO, BASICALLY YOU'RE SAYING...
...THAT MOTO-CHAN BELONGS TO YOU, SO HAND HER OVER?
YOU COME HERE WITH SOME SOB STORY AND THINK THAT SOMEHOW GIVES YOU THE RIGHT?
NO, AH...!
THAT'S A LOAD OF BULL, COWBOY!
YOU BRITS MUST BE REAL STUPID!
MOTO-CHAN ISN'T AN OBJECT TO GET PASSED AROUND! YOU CAN'T JUST WALTZ OVER HERE AND EXPECT TO EXPORT HER BACK TO ENGLAND LIKE SOME KIND OF SOUVENIR OF JAPAN!


AH THINK THAT'S WHAT SEALED THE DEAL.
THAT TOTALLY SOUNDS LIKE MOTO-CHAN'S MOM.
"The site"? Like construction?
Both of his jobs. English class and on the site.
MASAKO-SAN WENT AND COVERED PA'S SHIFT THAT DAY, SO THE WORK STILL GOT DONE.

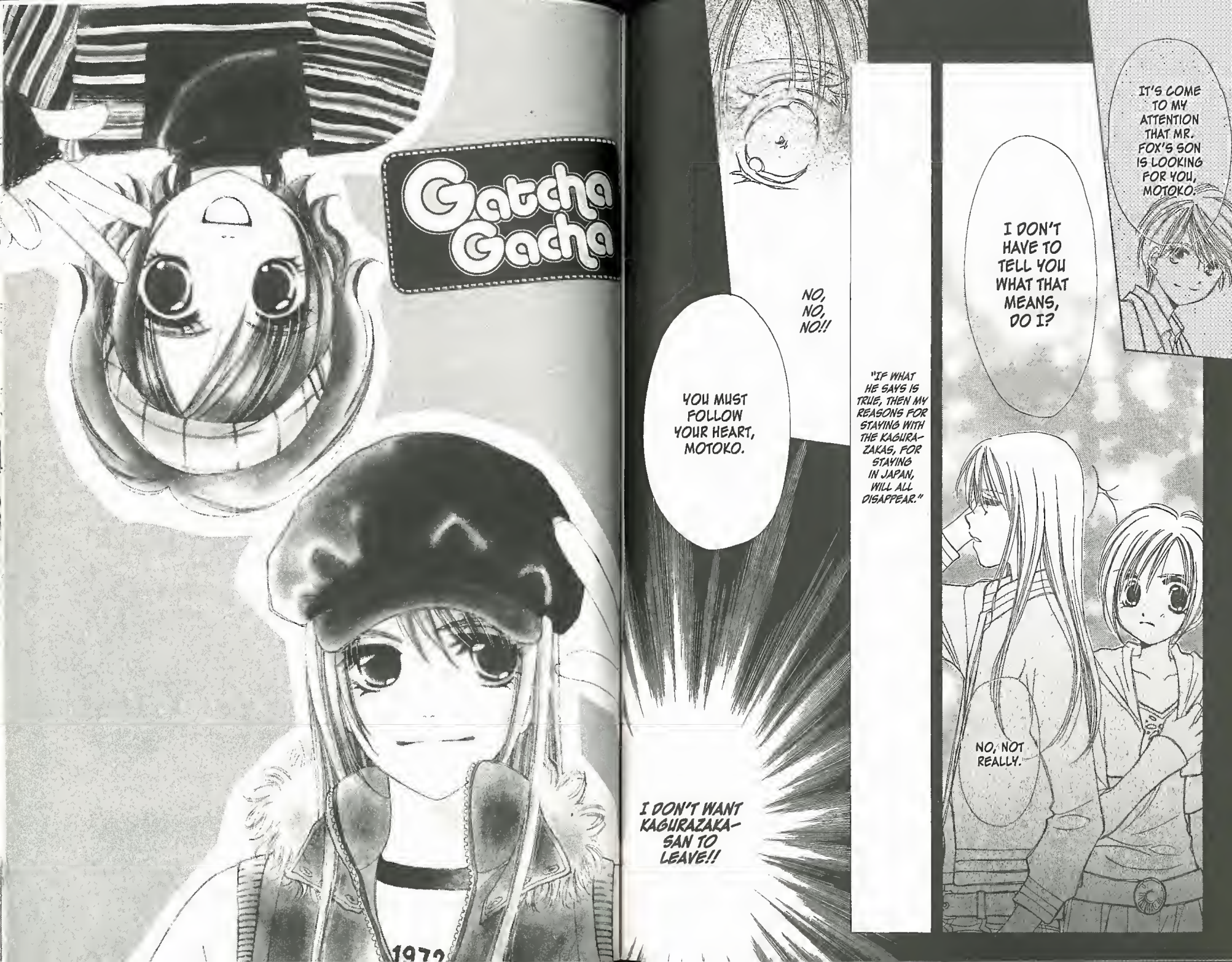
SHE'S NOT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN THE WORLD...
...BUT, TO ME, SHE IS THE MOST PRECIOUS PERSON THAT'S EVER LIVED.
THAT'S WHEN PA STARTED LIKING MASAKO-SAN AS MORE THAN A MEMBER OF HIS HOST FAMILY.
HE KNEW IT WASN'T FAIR TO MAH MA, BUT HE COULDN'T HELP IT.
MY ONE... MY ONLY...
...MASAKO-SAN.
PERSONALLY, AH THINK IT WAS TRUE LOVE.

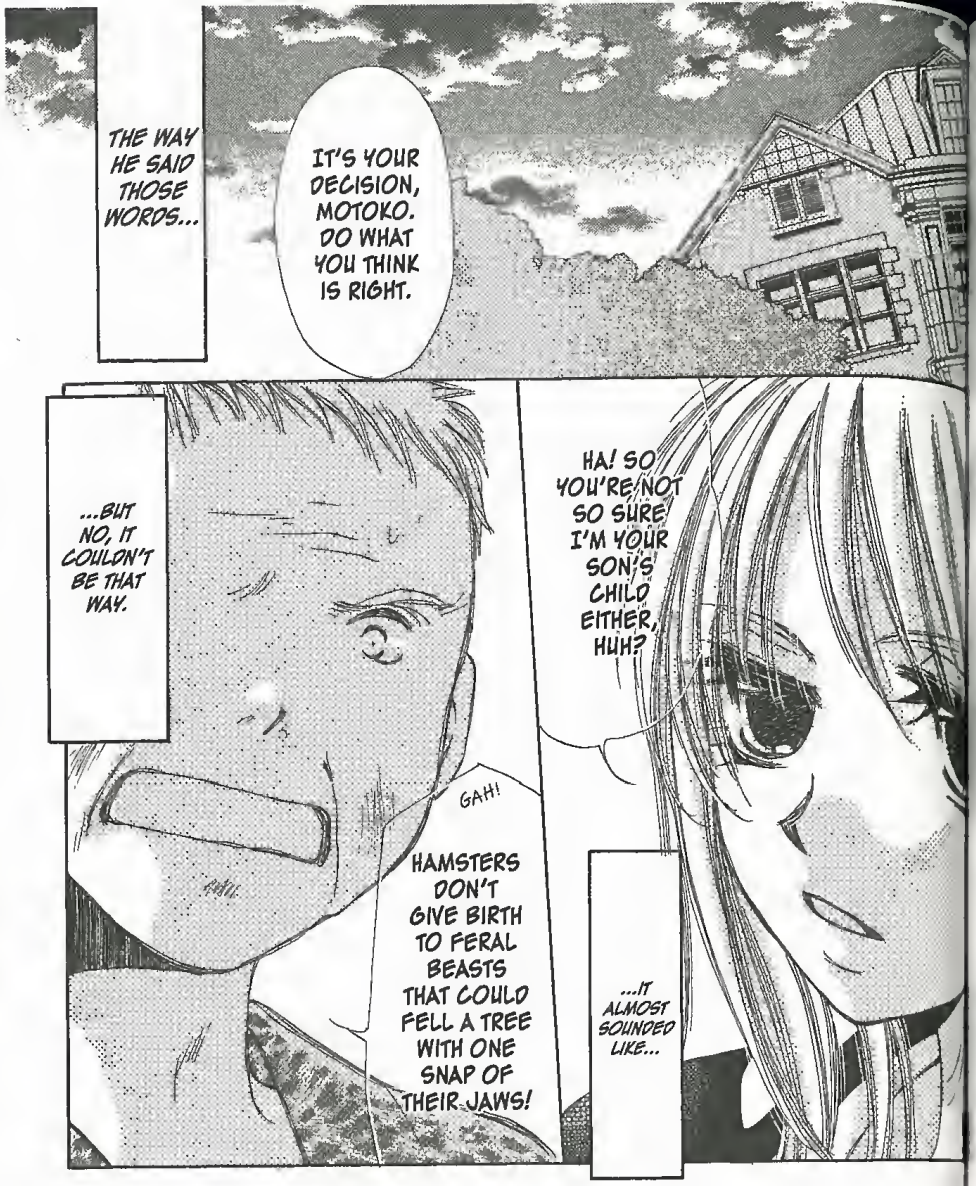

JUST SO'S YOU KNOW, WE ONLY EAT JAPANESE-RAISED BEEF, PAL!
.....
YOU TRYIN'
T' STA
SOMETHIN'?!
Foreigner "witch" hunt..?

I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHEN YOU'D SHOW UP.

W-WAIT ...!
NO! I WILL NOT WAIT! I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY TO YOU!!
ACTUALLY, ON SECOND THOUGHT, I DO HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU. WHY DID YOU COME TO GET MOTO-CHAN AND NOT YOUR PRECIOUS "PA"?
ER... WELL...
!!
AH...AH THINK...
...PA DOESN'T WANT TO CAUSE TROUBLE...
Stand behind the yellow line...
Don't touch me!
"TROUBLE"?! IF THIS IS ABOUT BLOOD, HOW CAN IT BE SO SIMPLE THAT IT'S ABOUT NOT "CAUSING TROUBLE"?
OW!
OH, PARDON ME...
KA-NAKO-SAN, LIS-TEN TO ME!
HUH?
WELL, WELL, WELL... LOOKEE HERE.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THIS YANKEE AGAIN.
Hm?

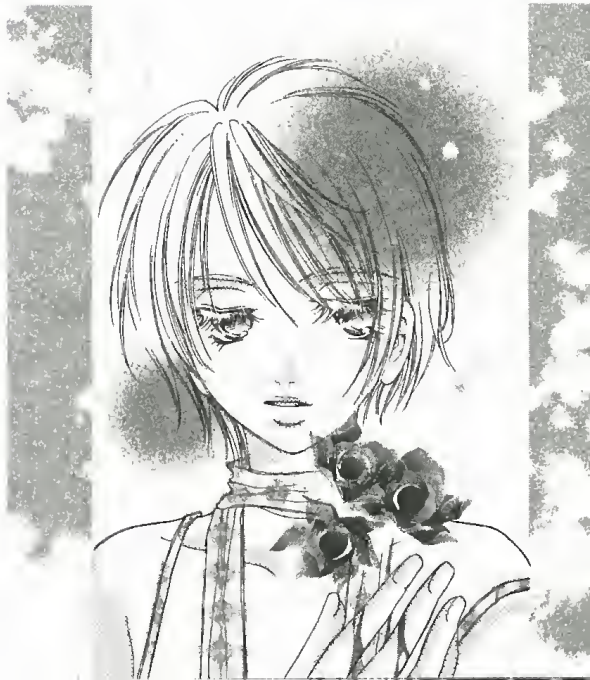
MOTOKO... IT'S TIME WE MADE IT CLEAR WHERE WE STAND WITH ONE ANOTHER.
WHOA! HOLD UP, GRANDPA!
PLEASE, TAKAHIRO, LET ME FINISH!
THEIR COMPANY HAS ITS OWN BUILDING IN THE CENTER OF LONDON, AND A MANSION THAT COULD DWARF OUR OWN. THEY COULD SUPPORT YOU WITH THEIR POCKET CHANGE.
I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE OF THIS, BUT THE FOXES ARE A FAMILY WHO MADE THEIR FORTUNE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE.
The father's here, too?
KAGURAZAKA-SAN?!
NO. I SUPPOSE I DON'T.
YOU DON'T WANT TO BE STUCK LIVING HERE AND CONSTANTLY DOUBTING WHERE YOU CAME FROM, DO YOU?
UP YOURS, GEEZER!
NO!!
I'M SORRY, BUT THIS IS OUR BUSINESS, NOT YOURS.
NO!
I MEAN, YOU TWO ARE FAMILY! YOU'VE LIVED TOGETHER FOR YEARS. YOU CAN'T CHANGE THAT!
WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
THE FOXES HAVE COME TO JAPAN.
PLEASE DON'T MIND US, SIR. WE'VE ONLY COME TO RETRIEVE A BAG AND WON'T BE LONG.
KAGURAZAKA! HAVE A LITTLE MORE RESPECT FOR YOUR GRANDFATHER!
SOMEONE PUT A BEE IN YOUR BONNET, OLD FART?
Nice dress, too.
OH! I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND US DROPPING BY, SIR.
GRANDPA...?
Huh?
MOTOKO.


Gatcha Gacha
IT'S COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT MR. FOX'S SON IS LOOKING FOR YOU, MOTOKO.
I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU WHAT THAT MEANS, DO I?
NO, NOT REALLY.
"IF WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE, THEN MY REASONS FOR STAYING WITH THE KAGURA-ZAKAS, FOR STAYING IN JAPAN, WILL ALL DISAPPEAR."
NO, NO, NO!!
YOU MUST FOLLOW YOUR HEART, MOTOKO.
I DON'T WANT KAGURAZAKA-SAN TO LEAVE!!


THE WAY HE SAID THOSE WORDS...
IT'S YOUR DECISION, MOTOKO. DO WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT.
...BUT NO, IT COULDN'T BE THAT WAY.
HA! SO YOU'RE NOT SO SURE I'M YOUR SON'S CHILD EITHER, HUH?
GAH!
HAMSTERS DON'T GIVE BIRTH TO FERAL BEASTS THAT COULD FELL A TREE WITH ONE SNAP OF THEIR JAWS!
...IT ALMOST SOUNDED LIKE...

Please direct fan letters of love and adoration for Tachibana to:

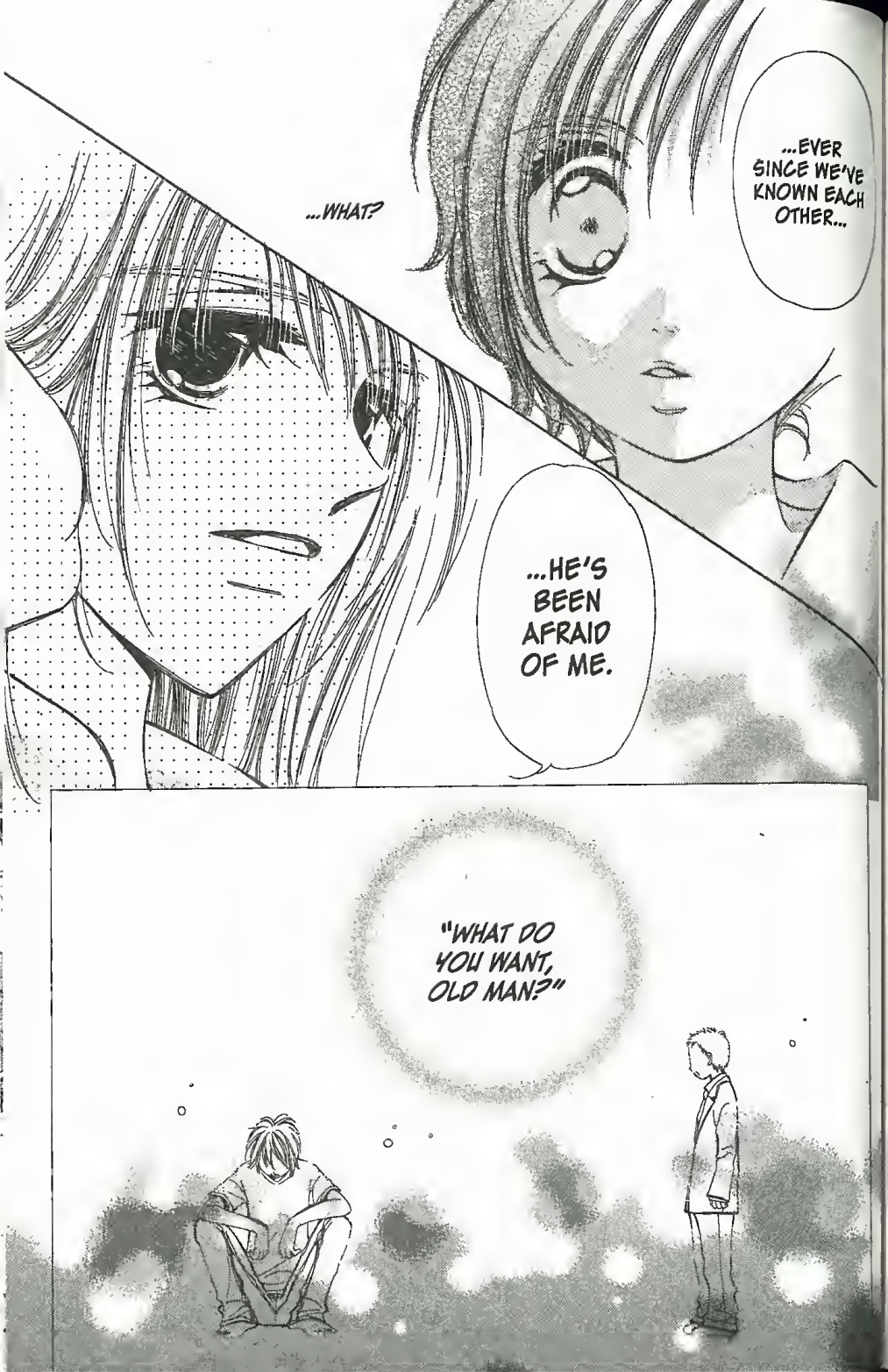
Yutaka Tachibana
5900 Wilshire Blvd. #2000
Los Angeles, Ca, 90036

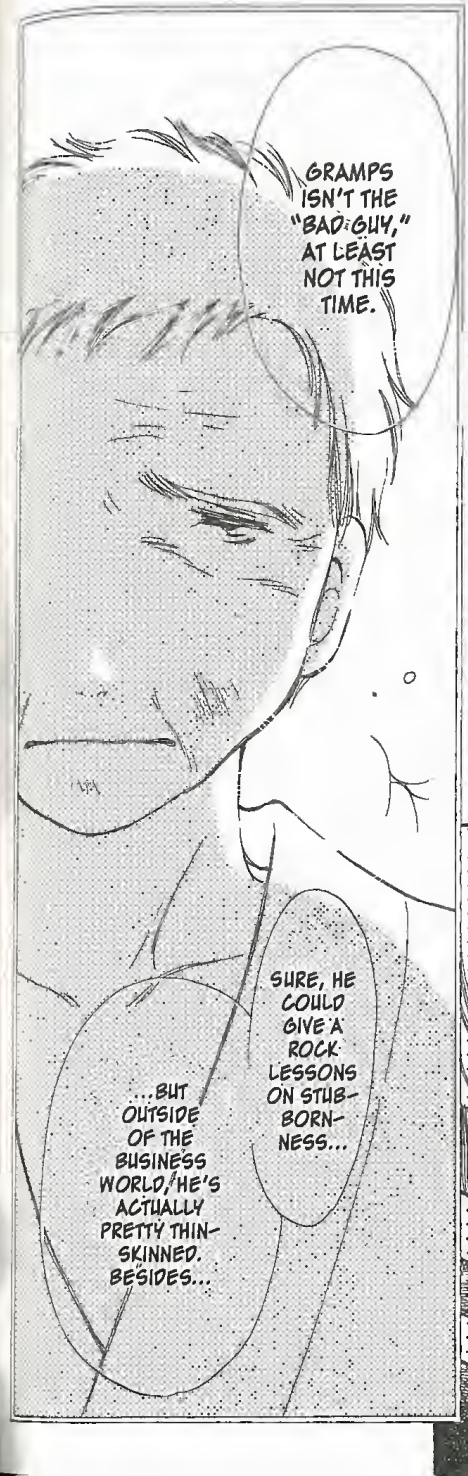


I'VE ALREADY GOT TWO BIG EATERS IN MY HOUSE!
COME AGAIN?
EVEN IF I HAVE TO GET AN AFTER-SCHOOL JOB, IT'LL BE WORTH IT!
I CAN EASILY FEED ANOTHER! NO PROBLEM!
ヨロ...
Hardcore nesting instinct.
M-MUROI?!
HOW CAN YOU ALL BE SO DAMNED SELF-ISH?!
I'LL NEVER LET YOU OR THOSE PALE ENGLISH PEOPLE TAKE HER FROM ME! NEVER!
I CAN'T LET HER STAY SOMEPLACE SHE'S NOT WANTED!
WHY DON'T YOU THINK ABOUT KAGURAZAKA-SAN'S FEELINGS FOR ONCE?!
YOU'RE ONLY THINKING ABOUT WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU, NOT HER!

...THAT HE DOESN'T NEED KAGURAZAKA-SAN ANY MORE?!

I'LL TAKE KAGURAZAKA-SAN!!!
UM... SINCE WHEN COULD BRITS TEAR DOWN TREES WITH THEIR TEETH?
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE CRACKING JOKES! GROW UP!!
HUH?
THAT DOES IT!
IS WHAT HE'S REALLY SAYING...


...WHAT?
...EVER SINCE WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER...
...HE'S BEEN AFRAID OF ME.
"WHAT DO YOU WANT, OLD MAN?"


GRAMPS ISN'T THE "BAD GUY," AT LEAST NOT THIS TIME.
SURE, HE COULD GIVE A ROCK LESSONS ON STUBBORNESS...
...BUT OUTSIDE OF THE BUSINESS WORLD, HE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY THIN-SKINNED. BESIDES...

UH, MOTOKO...
HOW COULD YOU SAY SOMETHING SO COLD TO A PERSON YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO CARE ABOUT?!
THAT GOES DOUBLY FOR YOU, GRANDPA! WHAT YOU SAID WAS ENTIRELY UNCALLED FOR!
Calm down, Mure...
YO! YURI.
WHAT?!
DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE, BUT WOULD YOU PUT A SOCK IN IT ALREADY?
HUH?!
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK.
WHY?!

"WHAT, YOU'RE GOING TO GRANDPA'S PLACE AGAIN?"
"YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER--!"
FOR A PEA-SIZED SHRIMP, THAT OLD COOT HAS WAY TOO MUCH ATTITUDE. HE MAKES ME MAD!
HELL NO.
DO YOU WANT TO COME ALONG?
YES. WE'RE GOING TO ASK ABOUT KANAKO-CHAN ONE MORE TIME.
Goodness.
YOU, TOO, MOTOKO-SAN.
BEEP
MOTO-CHAN! WATCH YOUR MOUTH!
Calm down, Masako-san...
BEEP

Game system Motoko insists she's "borrowing from a friend."

MASTER!
WHAAA? WHAT DO YOU--?
MISTRESS MOTOKO!
WE JUST RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE HOSPITAL! THEY SAID...!
"MOTOKO-CHAN! I JUST GOT A CALL FROM THE HOSPITAL!"
THEY SAID MISTRESS KANAKO FELL OFF THE PLATFORM AT THE TRAIN STATION!!

STILL, MOM AND DAD WORKED AND WORKED AND WORKED UNTIL THEY HAD A LITTLE BIT OF EXTRA MONEY SET ASIDE—JUST ENOUGH TO CARE FOR KANAKO.
I BARELY NOTICED THAT DAY WHEN THEY WERE LATER THAN USUAL GETTING BACK...
EVERY WEEK THEY'D COME TO THIS PALACE TO BEG FOR PERMISSION TO TAKE THEIR DAUGHTER HOME.
"STOP CALLING YOUR GRANDFATHER NAMES! IT'S DISRESPECTFUL!"
"W-WE'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT, MOTOKO-SAN. I PROMISE WE'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS WE POSSIBLY CAN."
THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS THEY EVER SAID TO ME.

GRANDPA NEVER GAVE AN INCH TOWARD ACCEPTING DAD'S MARRIAGE TO MOM.
WE ALL KNOW THAT BAG OF SKIN IS GONNA KEEP YOU WAITING FOREVER, SO I'M SURE YOU'LL GET BACK LATE.
GPA
Masako-san...!
STOP CALLING YOUR GRANDFATHER NAMES! IT'S DISRESPECTFUL!
Uhm
W-WE'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT, MOTOKO-SAN. I PROMISE WE'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS WE POSSIBLY CAN.
KANAKO-SAN'S EXORBITANT MEDICAL FEES WAS THE CLUB HE'D SWING TO KEEP HER PARENTS AWAY.
I'LL BE OVER AT RYOKO'S PLACE WATCHING MOVIES. COME GET ME WHEN YOU'RE HOME.
Ryoko: the college student next door.
ONE DAY, YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR GRANDPA. THEN YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.
YOU'LL REALIZE HE'S VERY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU THINK HE IS.

WHAT'S WRONG?
HEY, EVERYONE.
AND JUST WHOSE FAULT DO YOU THINK THAT IS, HUH?!
YOU ALL LOOK LIKE YOU'VE RUN A MARATHON.
UNHURT
SEE? EVERY-THING'S FINE.
You okay, Yabe?
Boo hoo hoo
SOMEBODY REALLY DID ALMOST DIE, YOU KNOW!
Don't be mean!
I AM SO GOING TO KILL YOU FOR BEING OKAY!!!

AS PER USUAL, GRANDPA MADE THEM WAIT FOR A CENTURY. THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED ON THEIR LATE-NIGHT TREK HOME.

A FINAL WORD...

First, thank you very much for reading all the way through to the very end. This is my last Freetalk for this volume. Of the five I had available to me, two of them turned into a long rant that I dashed off in anger. I apologize if they weren't the most pleasant things to read, but, you know, this is volume 7, so most of you should already be well aware of what kind of warped person I really am. To those of you who hadn't realized (or had just plain forgot), well, that's your own stupid fault.

Speaking of the Cafeteria Revolution, one of my assistants told me, "Why don't you have a little pity for the kids in countries that don't even get the option of crap lunches?"

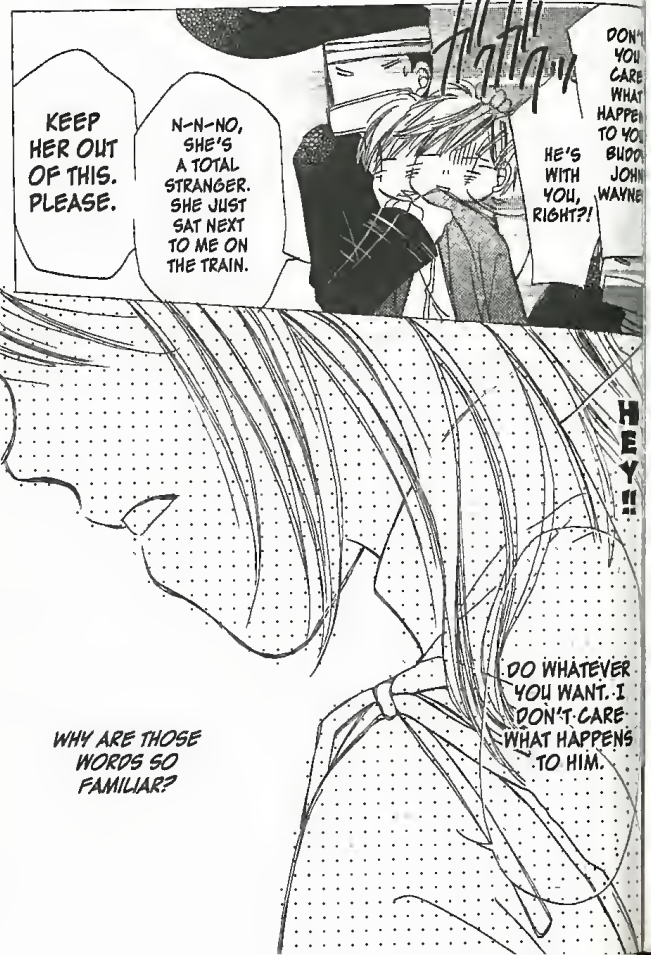
That's a very good point.

Oho ho ho ho ho...

I recommend you watch "Darwin's Nightmare" for that...

By the way, rather than bland truths, humans tend to prefer gaudy, trumped-up lies. That holds true even for documentaries. (Not that I can say much, after getting all fired up over just such a documentary...)

Anyways, what I'm trying to say is, always take what you hear with a grain of salt. Even when it comes from a mangaka like me!


KEEP HER OUT OF THIS. PLEASE.
N-N-NO, SHE'S A TOTAL STRANGER. SHE JUST SAT NEXT TO ME ON THE TRAIN.
HE'S WITH YOU, RIGHT?!
HEY!!
WHY ARE THOSE WORDS SO FAMILIAR?
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT. I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM.

JUST SO'S YOU KNOW, WE ONLY EAT JAPANESE-RAISED BEEF, PAL!
WHAT DOES YOUR PRISSY LIL' FDA THINK WE ARE, ANYWAY? IDIOTS?!
I bet they do!
Tired of saying he's British.
THAT HURTS MY FEELINGS, MAN. I'D TELL IT TO YOUR BIG BOSS IN HIS WHITE HOUSE, BUT YOU'RE THE CLOSEST THING I'VE GOT.

NOTHING'S CHANGED.
GAK!!
AAH!
BRO!!
I STILL HATE HIM!!
Tell me, what do you people have against the Irish?
Huh?
I MEAN, DUH!
Well, that's a long story...
YOU THINK THIS IS BAD? THINK AGAIN! MOTO-CHAN IS WAY MORE VIOLENT THAN EVEN I AM!
I ONLY LIKE ONE PERSON...
Bro!
PAUL.
HANG TOUGH, BRO!
KANAKO-SAN!
KA--
SHE'S NOTHING LIKE YOU EXPECT. YOU'LL DIE REGRETTING YOU EVER MET HER.
...AND THAT'S MOTO-CHAN!

AH'M TRULY SORRY, KANAKO-SAN.
"USED TO HATE TAKA-HIRO"? PAST TENSE...?
I SAID THAT BACK WHEN I USED TO HATE TAKAHIRO.
Whoa...
BASTARDS! I WAS TRYING TO FORGET THOSE WORDS.
TALK ABOUT YOUR COLD-HEARTED WOMEN...
"I DON'T CARE ABOUT HIM, OR WHETHER HE LIVES OR DIES!"
I'VE SAID SIMILAR THINGS.
RUN ALONG HOME NOW.
...BUT WHAT ABOUT NOW?
YOU GONNA HANDLE US, EH?
STARS 'N' STRIPES TALKING BIG!
USED TO...
AH SAID A WHOLE PASSEL OF THINGS THAT MUST'VE SOUNDED AWFUL HEARTLESS.
DON'T WORRY, AH'LL HANDLE THE REST MAHSELF.
NOW I...
BE SURE TO TELL YABE-SAN THANKS FOR ME, YA HEAR?

AUGGGH! BUDDY!
...QUIT YOUR BLUBBERING ALREADY?! I'M SICK OF HEARING IT!
WAAH
WAAH
WAAH
WOULD YOU...
WHA!?
Taking her anger at herself out on him...
AND THEN PAUL-MAKI JUMPED IN AND RESCUED HIM JUST IN THE KNICK OF TIME.
SO HE WAS THE ONE WHO FELL OFF THE PLATFORM, NOT YOU.
WHERE DID THEY PUT THE FOR-EIGNER?
THIS WOULD'VE BEEN NICE TO KNOW BEFORE WE CAME...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. AH DON'T MIND.
HIS NAME IS PAUL, HIRAO-SENPAI.
...SHE-DEVIL...
Aaah! Help me! The train!!
Hmm.
In shock
hee
hee
YUP. PAUL GRABBED HIM BY THAT RHINO HORN, AND NOW IT'S TALLER THAN EVER.

BUT...
AAAAAH!
ARE YOU SURE YOU STILL WANT TO GO SEE HER?
...AHH...
...YES!
BRO! BRO!
GYAAAAAAA
No glimmer of doubt in that 1,000-megawatt smile...
I guess he did... fly all the way to Japan for her...
OKAY...
Should've known he would.
THANK YOU SO MUCH, KANAKO-SAN!

I'LL COOL YOUR JETS!
THIS AIN'T THE SORT OF THING WE SHOULD BE DISCUSSIN' RIGHT OFF THE BAT--
COOL YOUR JETS, HONEY.
I'VE GOTTA BE AN HEIR TO THE FORTUNE. IT'S AN EQUAL SHARE OR NOTHING.
Any way to get an advance on that?
WHAT? WAI--
YOU WANT ME TO GO TO ENGLAND AS THE TRUE CHILD OF RALPH FOX--WHAT WILL I GET OUT OF THE DEAL?
KAGURAZAKA -SAN?
...EH?
NO.
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY CORRECT, MOTOKO-SAN. YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO ASK ABOUT THAT.
WHAT WERE YOU EXPECTING? SOME SORT OF SAPPY, TEAR-FILLED REUNION OF LONG-LOST SIBLINGS?

HELLO. MY NAME IS STUART FOX. AH'M THE SON OF RALPH FOX.
YOU'RE MOTOKO KAGURAZAKA, I PRESUME...?
Ah'm fine.
How's your head, Paul? You good?
In shock
Limey!
She wasn't lying
WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?
WOULD YOU PLEASE, ER, GO SEE MAH FA--
UM... AH HAVE A FAVOR T'ASK, MOTOKO-SAN.
Er...

--IPH!!
MURO!!
I DON'T CARE IF IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS, I WANT YOU TO CLARIFY SOMETHING FOR ME.
YURI MUROI, KAGURAZAKA-SAN'S #1 B.F.F.!
WHO?!
...BUT IS SHARING THE SAME BLOOD REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?!
THINK OF ME LIKE I'M STUPID AND DON'T REALLY GET WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...
THIS BLOOD RELATION THING. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?!
...EH?

AT LEAST ...
...NOT SOMEONE BRED WITH THE BLOOD OF BOTH FUMIO-SAN AND MASAKO-SAN.
AH'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD SIMILAR THINGS BEFORE.
WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING...
...THAT IT'S BEST FOR YOU TO BE WITH THE FOXES. TRUE FAMILIES ARE THE ONES BOUND BY BLOOD--

YOU SURE I'M NOT TOO INTENSE FOR YOUR FAMILY?
NO, NO. AH'M JUST A TOUCH SURPRISED, 'S ALL.
Worse than Kanako-san said...
THE SECOND AH SAW YOU, MOTOKO-SAN...
...AH KNEW IT WAS YOU. AH CAN SEE YOU'RE A FOX, NOT A KAGURAZAKA.

KAGURAZAKA-SAN?
...
...SHE COULD SMILE LIKE THAT.
HRMPH.
I'LL NEVER LIKE THAT GIRL.
Yuri Muroi...
I DIDN'T KNOW...
.....

THIS IS JUST TO SATISFY MY OWN CURIOSITY. IT'S NOT LIKE I'M TRYING TO KEEP YOU FROM DRAGGING KAGURAZAKA-SAN OFF TO ENGLAND OR ANYTH--
THANKS, SENPAI.
NO PROBLEM. MUROI LOVES TO DERAIL A CONVER-SATION.
RMPH!!! NNNPH!!
FON FOH!
(Don't go!)
MAFUAH-FAFAFAAN!
(Kagurazaka-san!)
IS A SHARED GENE POOL REALLY THE ONLY THING THAT CAN BRING A FAMILY TOGETHER?!

Sh.
WALK ME HOME.
UHM...
Is this a trap?
KANAKO? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I'm confused...
IF I'M LATE, MOM AND DAD WILL START TO WORRY.
YOU'RE LEAVING? WHAT ABOUT MOTOKO?
SHE'LL BE FINE.
HUH?!
IT'S ODD...
AT LEAST, I HOPE SO.
SO, HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR DAD ABOUT WHAT WENT DOWN?
...MOTO-CHAN HASN'T EVER SMILED LIKE THAT FOR ME.
I still love her most of all.
Hirao, we're bailing. Keep us up to date, 'kay?
HUH?

THOUGH...
...I DON'T HATE DUMB PEOPLE AS MUCH AS I USED TO.
REALLY?
I WONDER WHY?

...ANY GIRL THAT GOT THAT CLOSE TO MOTO-CHAN WOULD BE DEAD ALREADY.
AH!
OH!
DO YOU PLAN ON SITTING THERE STARING INTO SPACE FOREVER?
IF I WAS STILL WHO I USED TO BE...
...IT DOESN'T REALLY BOTHER ME.
TAKAHIRO...
WHEN I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU THAT FELL...
I-I'M SO, SO GLAD...
...THAT YOU'RE OKAY.
BUT NOW...
GONG
Why now...?
WHAT THE--?
...YOU REALLY ARE DUMB, YOU KNOW THAT?
...MY HEART FELT LIKE IT HAD STOPPED.
Ha ha...
REALLY GLAD.

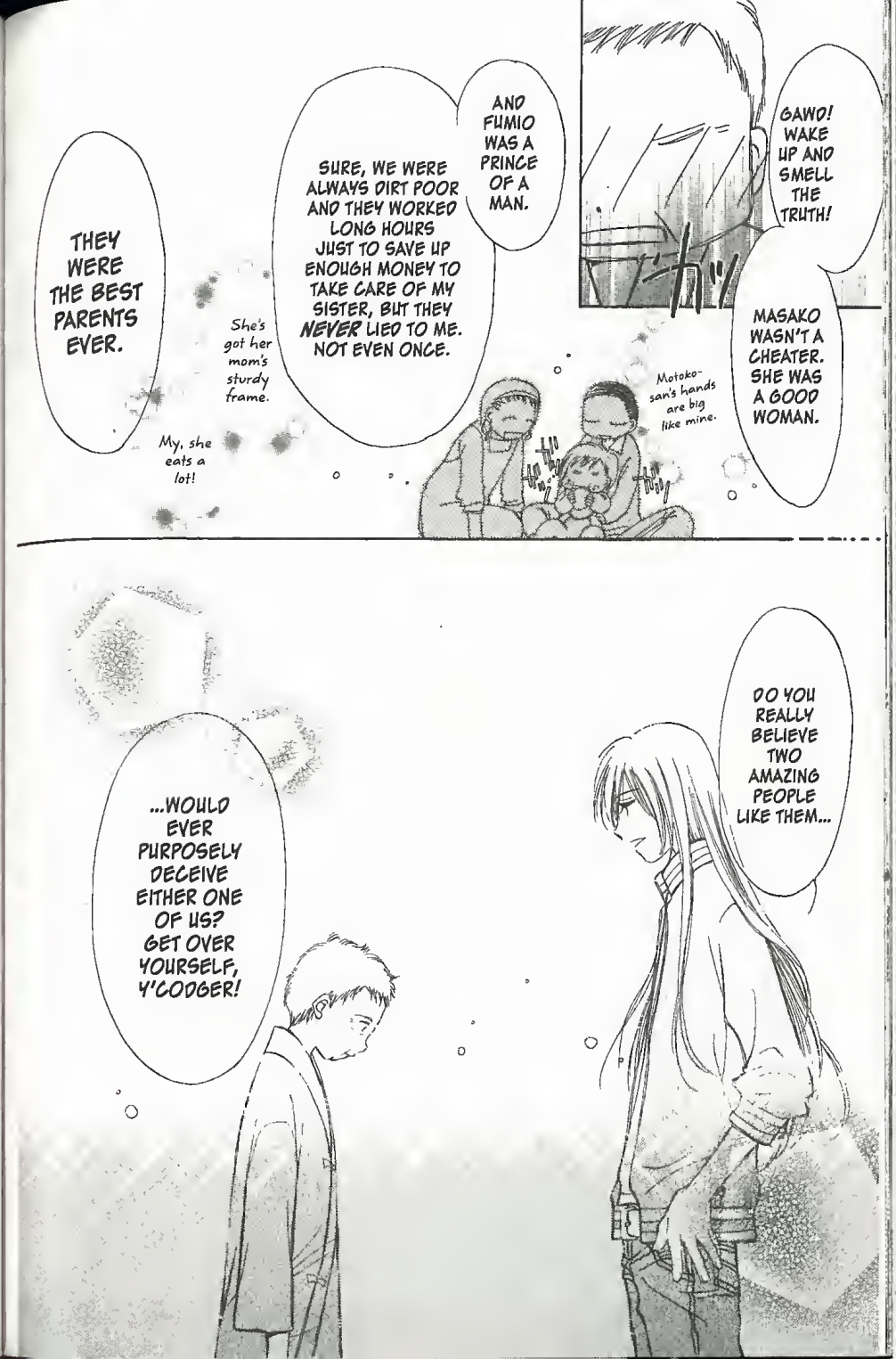
ACTUALLY, TAKING A GANDER AT YOUR POPS--
DON'T WARP THE MEMORY OF FUMIO AND MASAKO-SAN WITH YOUR CRUDE RUMOR-MONGERING.
STOP! PLEASE, THAT'S ENOUGH!
HAVE SOME RESPECT FOR THE DEAD! THEY DESERVE BETTER FROM YOU THAN CRASS SPECULATION ABOUT THEIR PRIVATE AFFAIRS!
YOU'RE THE WORST OF ALL!!
A stereotype
Ain't that right?
BESIDES, HE'S BRITISH. THOSE PEOPLE LOVE GOSSIPING ABOUT THE PRIVATE LIVES OF OTHERS.
HEY, THIS IS THEIR MESS.
GOSH... AH'M VERY SORRY, SIR...
But...

HAS HE TOLD YOU...
...WHETHER OR NOT HE AND MY MOM BUMPED UGLIES?
Hand gesture obscured.
YAAA!
DEAR LORD, THAT'S JUST PLAIN RUDE!
Yuri
Don't be dark!
You okay, grandpa?
"SECRET LOVECHILD"? SURELY THERE'S A MORE POLITE TERM...
WHY? BEATING AROUND THE BUSH JUST WASTES TIME.
Short 'n' sweet, baby.
ONLY YOUR DAD WOULD KNOW WHERE HE STUCK HIS THING. NO ONE ELSE CAN TELL US.
DID YOU EVEN TELL HIM WHAT YOU WERE DOING? OR WERE A FEW VAGUE BITS OF PROOF ENOUGH TO SEND YOU ON A QUEST FOR HIS SECRET LOVECHILD?
TYPICAL.
DON'T BE A SISSY! WHERE DO YOU THINK BABIES COME FROM?

.....
WHAT DOES HE...?
GAWD, HOW STUPID CAN YOU BE?
.....
IS IT REALLY THAT PRECIOUS TO YOU?
I DON'T THINK KAGURAZAKA NEEDS ANY COVER FIRE, MUROI.
THIS FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN GIRLS?
...HUH?
BUT...
WHO DO YOU WANNA HURT MORE? ME OR YOURSELF?
IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO DRIVE ME OUT OF JAPAN SINGLE-HANDEDLY.
W-WHY WOULD I--?

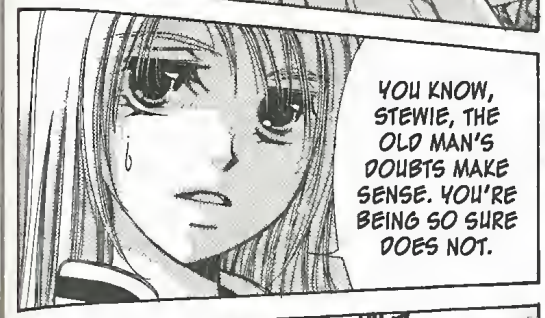
IT'S LIKE LOOKING AT TWO OF THE SAME PERSON.
MOTOKO, I ALREADY SEE YOU DIFFERENTLY. YOU RESEMBLE THE ENGLISH STUART HERE...
...MORE THAN YOU EVER DID YOUR JAPANESE GRANDPA.
PLEASE, JUST... STOP...
HE HAS A POINT.
SIDE BY SIDE, THEY COULD ALMOST BE TWINS.
YES, BOTH YOU AND KANAKO ARE QUITE LOVELY, BUT SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE HER MOTHER...MY SON'S FIRST WIFE, AYAKA.
NOT A ONE OF THEM.
BUT YOU...YOU DON'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE MASAKO-SAN, OR FUMIO, OR ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE KAGURAZAKA CLAN.
DO YOU REALLY NEED ANY MORE PROOF THAN THAT?
I DON'T CARE...

IN YOUR HEART, YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT.
"WHAT DO YOU WANT, OLD MAN?"
WOW, I...
...I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU HATED ME...
... RESENTED ME FOR WHAT I DID.
HOW YOU DEAL WITH THE THINGS YOU'VE DONE IS UP TO YOU...
...BUT IF YOU KEEP DRAGGING THAT BAGGAGE AROUND, IT'LL EVENTUALLY BREAK YOUR BACK.
THAT'S FOR SURE.
DUDE, WHEN HAVE YOU SEEN ME HOLD BACK MY HATE FROM ANYONE? YOU'D KNOW IT IF YOU WERE ON THE LIST.


GAWD! WAKE UP AND SMELL THE TRUTH!
MASAKO WASN'T A CHEATER. SHE WAS A GOOD WOMAN.
AND FUMIO WAS A PRINCE OF A MAN.
SURE, WE WERE ALWAYS DIRT POOR AND THEY WORKED LONG HOURS JUST TO SAVE UP ENOUGH MONEY TO TAKE CARE OF MY SISTER, BUT THEY NEVER LIED TO ME. NOT EVEN ONCE.
THEY WERE THE BEST PARENTS EVER.
She's got her mom's sturdy frame.
My, she eats a lot!
Motoko-san's hands are big like mine.
DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE TWO AMAZING PEOPLE LIKE THEM...
...WOULD EVER PURPOSELY DECEIVE EITHER ONE OF US? GET OVER YOURSELF, Y'COCKER!

Stuart
P-P-PA?
Huh?
He looks like an actor!
HOLY CRAP!
THAT OLD FART LOOKS JUST LIKE GRAMPS!
?!
PA! YOU'RE IN JAPAN?!
AH'VE BEEN WORRIED SICK ABOUT YOU!
WHAT IN THE BLUE BLAZES ARE YOU UP TO, BOY?
?!
でででででででで

I ALWAYS HELD BACK. I NEVER ACCEPTED YOU AS ENTIRELY MY OWN. NOT YET...
DON'T BE HASTY, MOTOKO-SAN! MEET OUR FATHER FIRST, THEN DECIDE!
HELL, ALL I NEEDED WAS TO SEE THAT PHOTO TO KNOW.
Eh?


YOU KNOW, STEWIE, THE OLD MAN'S DOUBTS MAKE SENSE. YOU'RE BEING SO SURE DOES NOT.

STUART!!
Wha?
KAGURAZAKA-SAN, WHEN DID YOU SEE A PICTURE OF PAUL-KUN'S FATHER?
YOU KIDDING? THERE'S A PICTURE OF HIM IN MOM'S OLD PHOTO ALBUM...

I'M YOUR GRANDDAUGHTER. THAT'S A PRECIOUS, LOVELY THING. YOU'VE ALWAYS LOVED ME, EVEN WITH THESE DOUBTS, BUT I'LL DROP YOU IN YOUR OWN LONELY MISERY IN A HEARTBEAT.
47

MOTOKO-SAN... ARE YOU HAPPY?
REALLY? YOU WANNA SEE A SHINKI PLAY OR SOMETHING?
Hm.
NAW, AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE LIVES THERE.
WELL, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.
WILL DO. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
FAIR ENOUGH.
SURE, BUT IF I SAID SO, I'D GET SICK FROM ALL THE CHEESE.
...
Westerners love that question.
No wonder he looks different.
AH GUESS BEING ADOPTED AND ALL, AH GOT A LITTLE TOO STUCK ON THE IDEA.
Turned this whole place inside-out looking!
Kagurazaka-sannn! We found yeur chilled tangerines!
YURI'S RIGHT. BLOOD'S GOT NOTHING' TA DO WITH IT.
...AND YOU SHOULD BE, WHAT WITH SO MANY PEOPLE WHO LOVE YOU AROUND.
FROM WHERE AH'M STANDING, THOUGH, Y'ALL LOOK PRETTY HAPPY...

...AND THE THEORY THAT MOTOKO KAGURAZAKA WAS REALLY HALF-BRITISH WAS COMPLETELY DISPROVED.
Young Mr. Fox was often mistaken for a native Japanese man.
I'M #1
Asahi 28 At Wakaba Apartments
ACTUALLY ...
AH WAS THINKING ABOUT SWINGING BY OSAKA BEFORE HEADING BACK HOME.

We looked everywhere!
THIS IS YOUR PA?!
THIS GUY IS THE FAMOUS RALPH FOX?!
IT TOOK ONE LOOK...
AH'M TRULY SORRY MAH SON CAUSED Y'ALL NO END OF TROUBLE, FOLKS.
HA HA HA.
ASSISTANT

...AH THOUGHT Y'ALL WAS CUTE THE MOMENT AH LAID EYES ON YOU.
KISS
YEAH, WHA--
-- HUH?
TRUTH BE TOLD...
WHA?!
Not gay savvy.
...YOU LOOK A LOT LIKE THE PRINCE I'VE DREAMED ABOUT EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
AFTER ALL...
Well, ta-ta for now!
BARF
NO WAY!!
"Naw, an old friend of mine lives there."
"Ah was thinking about swinging by Osaka before heading back home."
"Well, y'see, when Ah was little, mah neighbor and best friend was a Japanese boy.. he gave me the nickname Paul-maki."
AH!
Your penalty for leaving early this afternoon!
"TRUE FAMILIES ARE THE ONES BOUND BY BLOOD..."
HERE YOU GO! CHILLED TANGERINES!
He's right.
THANKS MUCHLY, YURI-SAN.
Everyone lost their heads
AND YOUR MOM DIDN'T NEED TO GET ALL WORKED UP ABOUT IT, EITHER.
WELL, IT'S NOT ALL YOUR FAULT, PAUL. I MEAN, YOUR DAD'S DIARY WAS PRETTY MIS-LEAD-ING.
IF EVERYONE HAD TALKED THINGS OVER BEFORE RUNNING OFF HALF-COCKED, THEN MAYBE THIS WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED.
Ain't?
KANAKO-SAN.
I HATE THIS KID.
OH...
...YABE-SAN, ONE LAST THING.
AH THOUGHT IF AH FOUND YOU, AH COULD PAY BACK SOME OF THE KINDNESS MA AND PA SHOWED ME.
TURNS OUT AH WAS WRONG.
Ah'm so sorry!
TRULY AH AM!

P.S. Tachibana Tells It Like It Is

You know, I can really see her gulping down a whole 1.5 liter bottle of water in one go.
Oh. No chest...
How dare you go digging up my past?!
Good-for-nothing twerp!
And what's with all the girl-girl stuff?
Hello, everyone! So what did you think of volume 7 of Gatcha Ga--

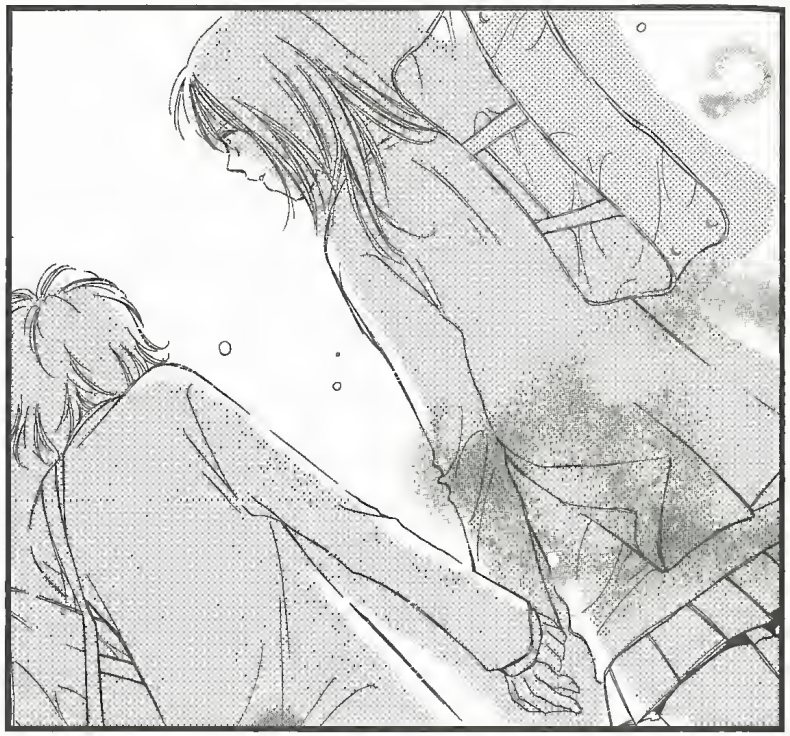
That dork!
He didn't come to Japan looking for a sister, he came here to visit his boyfriend!!
A girl version of Yabe sounds disturbing.
You don't know that. It could be a girl in Osaka.
You're mine to paw!
Whatever the case, you stay away from him, Takahiro.
Wha?
Weird. Even with Yabe-senpai and Kagurazaka-san flirting like that...
Yabe-senpai...
I can't help it if I'm cute!
The hair ornament Hirao-senpai gave me.
I've been wearing it since yesterday, too.
Hmph.
...I can't get another, completely unrelated coupling out of my head.
"Is it really that precious to you? This friendship between girls."

Gatcha Gacha 7 / END

I'VE ALWAYS HATED ANYONE WHO WAS BETTER THAN ME! ALWAYS!!
IT'S THE PRETTY-BOY THING. YOU HATE GUYS WHO LOOK PRETTIER THAN YOU.
I HATE 'EM IF THEY GOT BRIGHTER EYES, HATE 'EM IF THEY GOT WHITER SKIN, HATE PRETTIER EYEBROWS--HATE 'EM ALL! HATE 'EM!!
I hate 'em so much, I emasculate them completely!
FYI: Tachibana is dark complexioned
SO THAT'S WHY!
HUH?
TH-THAT'S WRONG IN SO MANY WAYS...
MEN ARE HAIRY AND SWEATY, NOT PRETTY AND DAINTY!
SEE YOU IN VOLUME 8!
Ain't my fault!
Er...well... anyway...
ARE YOU NUTS? THAT AIN'T ME! YOUR UNHAPPINESS IS A DECREE OF FATE! HAW HAW!
UH, MUROI? LAST I CHECKED, YOU'RE NOT A DUDE.
BECAUSE I'M BEAUTIFUL!
NO WONDER YOU'VE ALWAYS PUT ME THROUGH SO MANY HARDSHIPS!

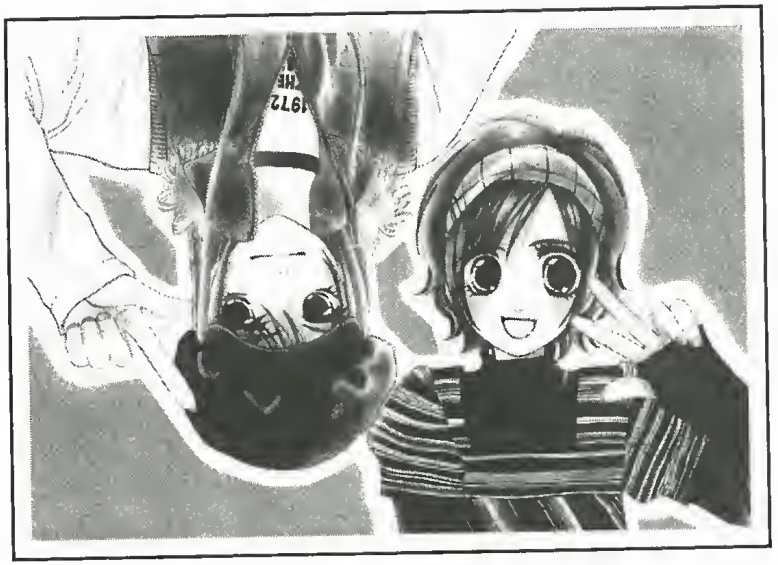
P.S. Tachibana Tells It Like It Is / END

IS THERE REALLY ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT, KAGURAZAKA-SAN? AT LEAST YOU GOT LOTS AND LOTS OF PAGE TIME.
YOU SURPRISED? TACHIBANA HAS ALWAYS HATED YOU!
I WAS ONLY IN ONE SINGLE PANEL THIS ENTIRE VOLUME...
WHAT?!
WHY DOES MY CREATOR HATE ME?!
WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE?!
OH, IT'S NOT JUST YOU. I HATE EVERYBODY...
Say ewhat?!
TELL ME WHY! PLEASE!
WHY?!



Stay tuned for Volume 8, coming soon!

For seven volumes, Yuri has struggled with one challenge after another. Is there a happy ending in store for her or has she set herself up for another huge disappointment? See how it all ends in the eighth and final volume of *Gatcha Gacha!*



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As Motoko and Yuri head to school, they bump into an odd girl named Sae, an acquaintance of Motoko's from junior high. What happened between these two—and does it explain Motoko's current behavior? And as if one blast from the past wasn't enough, a young man shows up from England...claiming to be Motoko's brother! Revelations abound in this volume of *Gatcha Gacha*!

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